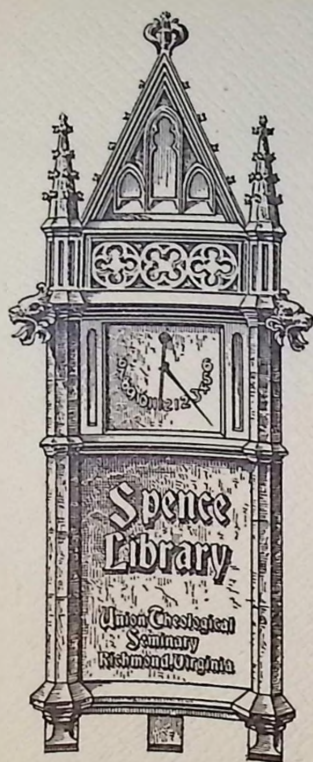


MEN OF POWER

FRED EASTMAN

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MEN OF POWER

VOL. IV

SIXTY-MINUTE BIOGRAPHIES

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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By

FRED EASTMAN

*Professor of Biography, Literature, and Drama
at The Chicago Theological Seminary*



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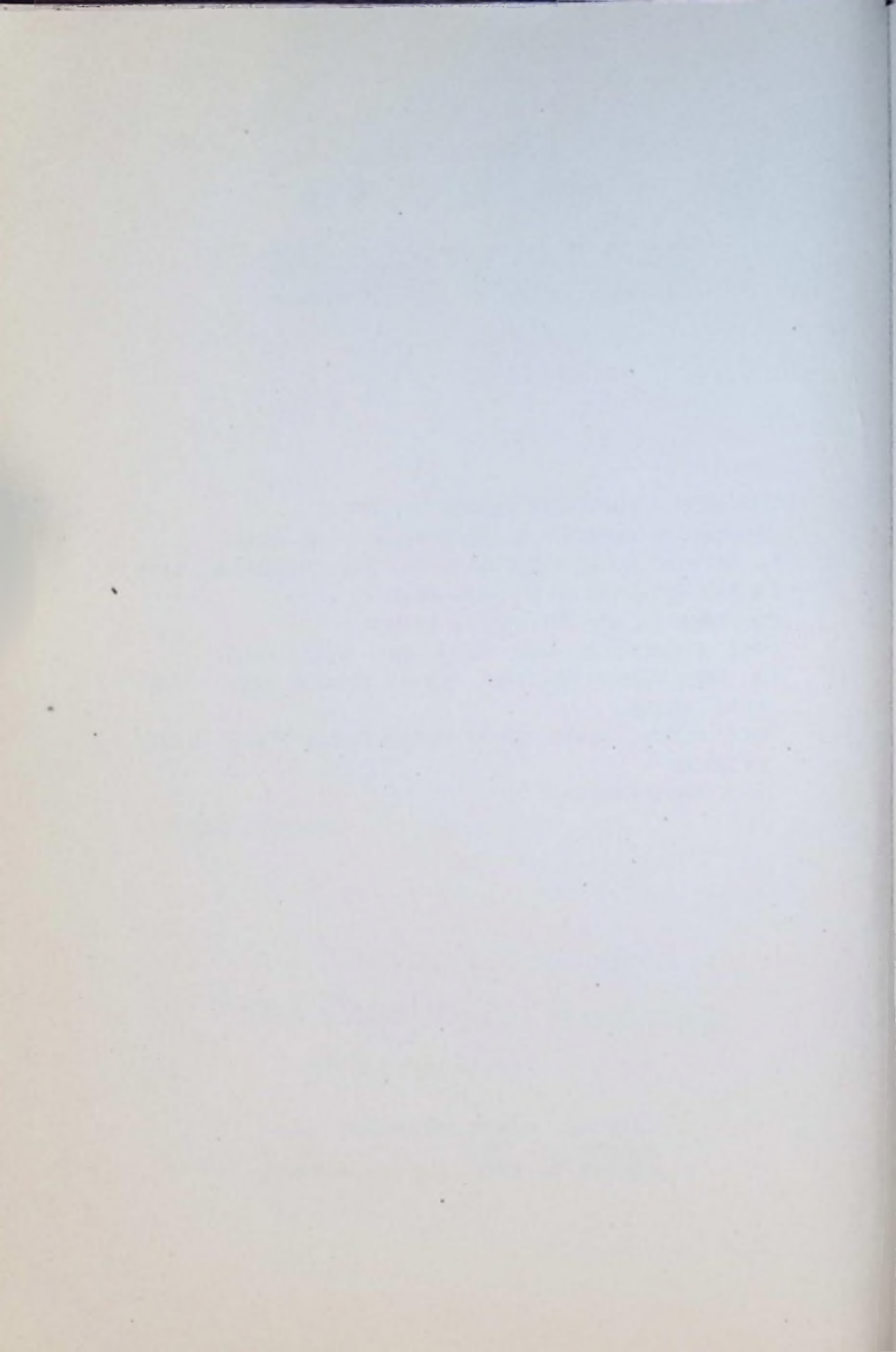
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E.I.
V. 4

“OH, MAY I JOIN THE CHOIR INVISIBLE
OF THOSE IMMORTAL DEAD WHO LIVE AGAIN
IN MINDS MADE BETTER BY THEIR PRESENCE; LIVE
IN PULSES STIRRED TO GENEROSITY,
IN DEEDS OF RECTITUDE, IN SCORN
FOR MISERABLE AIMS THAT END WITH SELF,
IN THOUGHTS SUBLIME THAT PIERCE THE NIGHT
LIKE STARS,
AND WITH THEIR MILD PERSISTENCE URGE MEN’S
SEARCH
TO VASTER ISSUES.”

GEORGE ELIOT



FOREWORD

I shall try to *explain* these men, not expose or glorify them. They all had power. Where did they get it? They accomplished great things for the common good. Why? Together with the men in the four other volumes in this series they bequeathed to us no small part of our social, scientific, political, and spiritual heritage. How? To paraphrase Shakespeare's line,

The cause, dear reader, was not in their stars,
But in themselves, that they were men of power.

In these studies I hope to discover the influences that operated to lift these men above the level of the commonplace and to set their feet on higher ground. I shall present each man's heredity, his cultural and national background, his early home and school, his friendships, his purposes, his habits of work, his opponents, and his philosophy of life. From these considerations it may be possible to construct an understandable picture of his growing personality. Such biographical portraits will give more attention to each man's early struggles than to his later accomplishments, more importance to what went on within his heart as a youth and young man than to the honors that came to him as an old man.

Gratefully I acknowledge the constructive criticism

MEN OF POWER

of my wife, whose passion for accuracy has saved me from many a slip and whose encouragement has kept me at the task. My thanks also to Professor Matthew Spinka and Mr. Emerson W. Shideler, for their assistance in the sketch on Tolstoy.

F. E.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	7
----------------	---

I

ABRAHAM LINCOLN	13
-----------------------	----

II

LEO TOLSTOY	81
-------------------	----

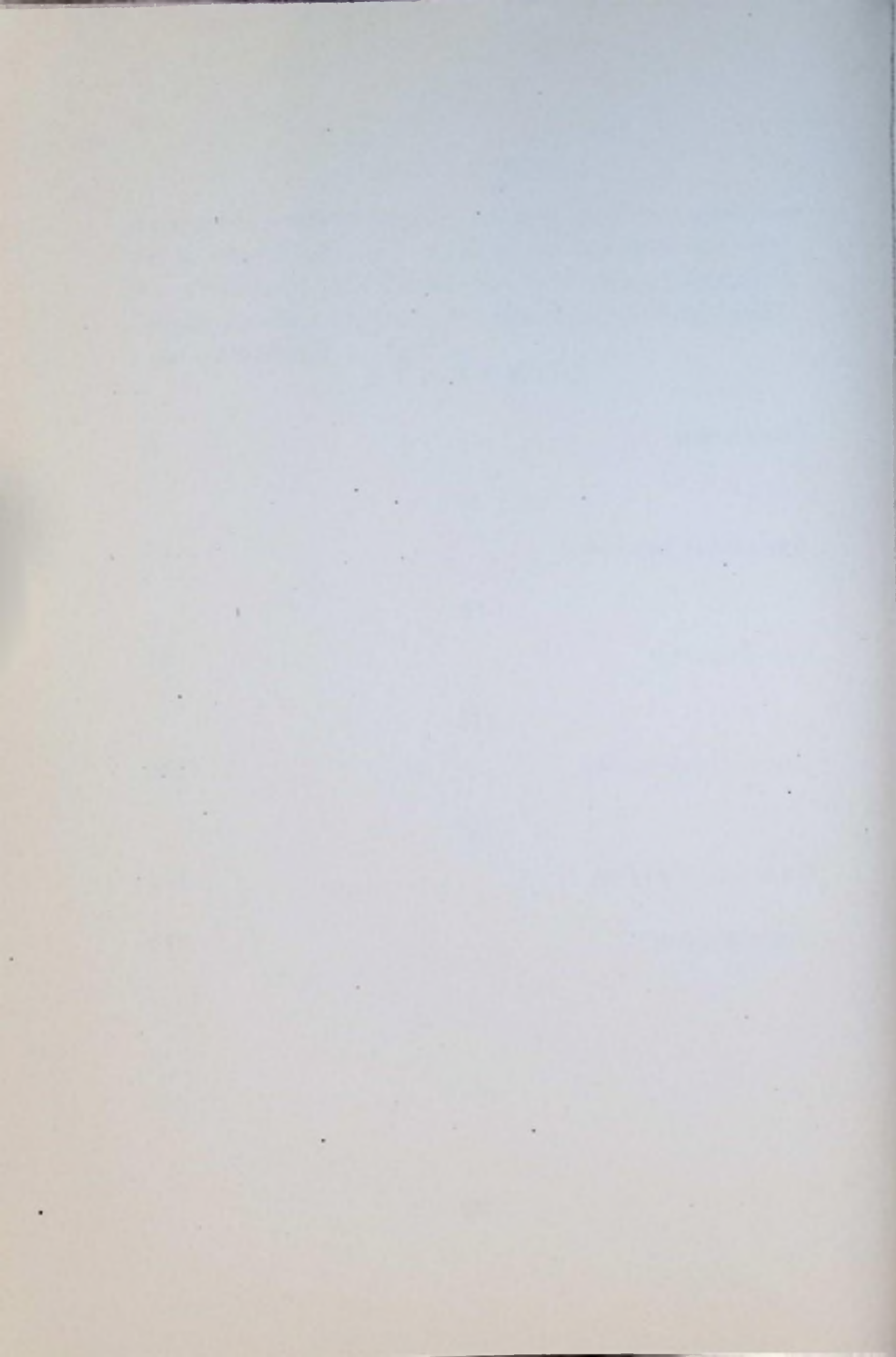
III

JOHN BURROUGHS	136
----------------------	-----

IV

GRAHAM TAYLOR	172
---------------------	-----

BIBLIOGRAPHY	219
--------------------	-----



MEN OF POWER





ABRAHAM LINCOLN

1809-1865

MORE than 5,000 books, plays, and pamphlets have been written about Abraham Lincoln. My only excuse for adding to this mass of biographical material is that no one thus far has attempted to present his life in condensed form through a series of dramatic incidents. I shall endeavor to do so here, selecting from the successive periods of his life typical incidents that portray his struggles as growing boy and man and the personal and environmental influences that tended to shape his character.

At Birth. The day is February 12, 1809; the place, the one-room, earthen-floor log cabin of the Lincoln farm on Big South Fork of Nolin's Creek about two and a half miles from Hodgenville, Kentucky. His mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, "shrewd and dark and

MEN OF POWER

lonesome," is lying upon the bed, the infant Abe, only a few hours old, nestled against her breast. Her nephew, Dennis Hanks, a nine-year-old lad, stands breathless beside her. Only a few minutes earlier, Tom Lincoln, the itinerant farm hand and carpenter, little Abe's father, has stopped at the Hanks farm to announce that Nancy had given birth to a son. Dennis has come running to be the first to see his new cousin. He asks Nancy to let him hold the infant, and she consents. He takes the child in his arms. But little Abe promptly sets up a wail, and nothing Dennis can do comforts him. Finally, half in disgust and half in mirth, he hands the baby back to Nancy. "Take him, Aunt. He'll never come to much."

There is an unconfirmed tradition that later the same day the infant had convulsions and was only saved by a neighbor woman's sousing him in a washtub of warm suds.

At the Age of Six. The scene: The Knob Creek farm eight miles from Hodgenville, Abe's home from his third to his eighth year. His father announces that the boy's pet pig is fat enough to kill. A barrel of hot water has been prepared for the scalding. Abe cannot bear to have his pet butchered. He has raised it, taught it tricks and how to play hide-and-seek with him. It is his inseparable companion in fields and woods. He cares for it as much as any more fortunate boy ever cared for a pony. Stealthily now he slips out of the barnyard, taking the pig with him to the woods. His

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

father, sighting the fleeing pair, shouts, "You, Abe, fetch back that pig! You, Abe, fetch back that pig!" The louder he calls, the faster Abe runs with the pig, till at last he is out of hearing of that voice of doom. All night long he stays in the woods fearing to come home. The next day he returns and receives a severe scolding.

On the following morning, resolved again to save his pet, he rises early, but discovers that his father has arisen even earlier and has made fast the pig. The boy can eat no breakfast nor can be induced to see the slaughter of the one animal he has come to love. When he hears it squeal as the knife slits its throat, he runs as fast as he can to get away from the sound. Hours later, when he comes back to the clearing, the slaughtering is finished, and his pig hangs from a pole near the house. Unable to stand the sight, Abe runs blubbering back to the woods, not to return again till nightfall. The next day he goes out into the yard, finds the red place on the ground where the pig's blood has been spilt, scrapes up the hair that has been scattered about and burns it. Then in the folds of his shirt he carries soft dirt to the scene of the butchering and sprinkles it over the ground to cover up every trace of the killing of his pet.

But the dirt cannot blot the memory from his mind, and never afterward can he see other boys caring for their pets without sympathizing and recalling the tragic end of his own. Nor can he find much sport in killing

MEN OF POWER

the wild deer and turkeys and other game so abundant in the neighborhood. He will go hunting now and then as he grows older, but he will be quite content to have his father and the older boys do most of the killing.

At Six and a Half. It is an evening in late summer on the Knob Creek farm. Abe has had three months' schooling—trudging four miles each morning and back again in late afternoon, clad only in a one-piece linsey shirt, so that the other boys have dubbed him "shirt-tail boy." He has learned the alphabet and how to do a few simple sums, such as two-plus-two-is-four. Now he is practicing his letters, using the blade of a shovel for a slate and a piece of charcoal for a pencil. When he wants to see how words look in print, he goes over to the one book the family possesses, opens its cover, and comes upon these words that tell what the book is about: "The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, with Arguments prefixed to the Different Books, and Moral and Theological Observations illustrating each Chapter, composed by the Reverend Mr. Osterwald, Professor of Divinity." Strange words, mysterious words! Some day, if he keeps practicing, he will know more about them.

At Eight. The family has moved to a farm on Little Pigeon Creek in southern Indiana. Their home is but a "half-faced camp" in the woods. It is a shed made of poles, branches of trees, dried leaves and mud, its fourth side open to the south. It has no floor, no window, and no chimney. The family sleeps on beds of leaves

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

covered with skins of bear or deer. A log fire burns night and day at the open side of the camp. Visitors are few and far between. A stranger on horseback stops for rest and refreshment. Tom Lincoln has hardly time to drawl out a laconic welcome before Abe, tense with interest and curiosity, begins to ask questions of the newcomer. He fires one query after the other in rapid succession until his father cuffs him on the head, saying, "Shut up; ain't you got no better manners than to pester a stranger to death with questions? Get away!" Abe, his ears burning, slinks off to find his cousin Dennis. "Denny," he complains, "Pap thinks it ain't polite to ask folks so many questions. I reckon I wasn't born to be polite. There's so many darned things I want to know."

At Nine. The new, one-room log cabin, eighteen feet square, which Tom Lincoln has built on the Pigeon Creek farm. No windows; the door merely an opening in one wall high enough for a man to stoop through. Large fireplace. Dirt floor. Bedsteads cleated to the corners of the cabin. A table of slabs; around it three-legged stools. Pegs stuck in one wall make a ladder to the loft, which is Abe's "room"; a heap of corn husks and dry leaves covered with a bearskin his bed. It is early morning before sunrise. Tom Lincoln is at the table, finishing his breakfast. Abe stands before his mother, who is giving him a special inspection in the light of the fireplace. He is dressed in a brown shirt and trousers of deerskin, and buckskin moccasins are

MEN OF POWER

on his feet. His hands and face have been scrubbed, but his coarse black hair is still a tangled mop. She combs it, smacks a kiss upon his upturned mouth, and pronounces him ready for school. "You air a-goin' to have a real eddication," says his father. "Yessir, you air a-goin' to larn readin', writin', and cipherin'." So off Abe goes—hand in hand with his sister Sally—nine miles through the woods to the rural school. An eighteen-mile round trip is a long hike for an "eddicat-ion," but it's an investment which may some day produce returns to justify it.

At Nine and a Half. The same farm on Pigeon Creek. A mood of sorrow. Nancy Hanks is dead of the "milk-sick," a pestilence that has taken a fearful toll of human beings and animals on the frontier. Her scrubbing, washing, patching, cooking, and all the drudgery of her hard-bitten days on the frontier are ended. Tom Lincoln and the neighbors have buried her at the foot of a tree. But Abe is not content that his mother, who has brought him his Bible and communicated to his young heart something of her own yearning for a deeper understanding of the secrets of life, should be laid to rest without a religious ceremony. There is no minister in the neighborhood, but Abe knows of an itinerant Methodist preacher a hundred miles or more away. So here we find him beside his mother's grave, painfully scrawling out a letter to this Parson Elkin, asking him to come in the following spring and conduct a funeral service. Months later, when the redbud

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

and dogwood are in bloom, the parson comes, the service is held, and Abe is satisfied that his mother has been duly honored.

At Ten. A wagon drawn by four horses has pulled up in front of the Pigeon Creek cabin. Abe and his sister Sally, who have waited weeks for the return of their father from a long journey back to Kentucky, stare wide-eyed at the conveyance and its freight of human beings and furniture. Off its broad seat jumps Tom Lincoln, followed by his new wife, Sarah Bush Lincoln, and her three children by her first husband.¹ Next from the wagon come feather mattresses and pillows, a real "store" bureau of black walnut, a table, chairs, pots, skillets, and other kitchen utensils. And last, and best of all, as Abe sees it, books! There are more wildcats than books in southern Indiana, and here are four precious volumes: *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Aesop's Fables*, and *Sinbad the Sailor*. Abe has never seen so much wealth.

"Here's your new mammy," says Tom. The woman, tall and strong of body, kind of face, reaches out an arm and draws the boy to her side. She goes with him into the house. He shows her his loft and his "bed" of corn husks and leaves. She promptly sweeps them up and piles them in the yard, saying, "They'll be good

¹ Tom's proposal, according to Carl Sandburg, was: "I have no wife, and you have no husband. I came a-purpose to marry you. I knowed you from a gal, and you knowed me from a boy. I've no time to lose; and if you're willin', let it be done straight off." Her reply: "I got debts." Tom paid the debts, bought a license, and the two were married December 2, 1819.

MEN OF POWER

for a pigpen later on." That night, for the first time in his life, Abe sinks his head into a real pillow and his lengthening bones into a featherbed.

He likes his new mother. He likes her more in the years that follow, when she cares for him as tenderly as for any of her own children. She likes him, too, for he never speaks a cross word to her, often makes her laugh with his jokes, and always tells her the truth. When, three years later, Abe wants to go to school again and Tom Lincoln thinks the boy has enough "ed-dication," having learned the rudiments of reading, writing, and ciphering, she sides with Abe and sees to it that he has the chance to go further.

She persuades or compels Tom to put a floor in the cabin, finish the roof, put in a door, and cut a hole in the wall where a greased paper can be inserted to let in more light. Even this does not satisfy her. She insists on better bedsteads, a proper table, and a few hickory chairs. She herself undertakes to keep the whole outfit meticulously clean. Tom may doubt the bargain he has made in this second marriage, since it brings him so much toil; but Abe never forgets the transformation her coming produces.

At Thirteen. Another evening in the cabin on the Pigeon Creek farm. Abe's days have been a long succession of helping his father clear the woods, tend the cows and hogs and chickens, plough the few acres of yellow clay soil, plant corn, potatoes, and beans, harvest them in the fall, and through the winter months make

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

doors, window frames, ax handles, yokes, wagon beds, wheels, and coffins. His hours with books have been few and far between. This is one of those evenings he loves best, when, the work done, he can sprawl in front of the fire with a book. Tonight it is Aesop's *Fables*. He reads aloud to his stepmother and to Dennis Hanks, who is whittling. Abe relishes the fables and chuckles as he reads, but the prosaic Dennis cannot share his pleasure; after a few of the stories Dennis pronounces his solemn verdict, "Abe, them yarns is all lies!" Without putting down the book Abe answers: "Mighty darned good lies, Denny," and goes on with the reading. Dennis prefers whittling.

At Fourteen. Abe is pacing the floor of the loft of the Pigeon Creek home. He is bothered about a problem that would never disturb Dennis or most boys of his age. He has listened to the conversation about politics and religion—and has come up to the loft to be alone and to try to put what he has heard in a form which a boy can understand. Hour after hour he walks up and down, endeavoring to make out the exact meaning of the conversation of his elders. He cannot sleep when on such a hunt for an idea until he has caught it. When he thinks he has it, he is not satisfied until he can repeat it over and over in language plain enough for any boy he knows to comprehend. By this sort of self-discipline he develops his power of understanding and of clear and forceful expression.

At Fourteen or Fifteen. Abe, on the way to the mill,

MEN OF POWER

comes across a boy torturing a terrapin by placing live coals upon its back and watching until they burn a hole in it—a common amusement of those days. But Abe sees nothing funny in it. "Don't terrapins have feelings?" he demands. The torturer does not know the answer but starts to put another burning stick upon the creature's back. Abe wrenches the stick from his hand, brushes the coals from the terrapin's shell, stamps them out, and sets the animal free. "Well, feelings or none, he won't be burned any more while I'm around," says young Lincoln.

At Fifteen or Sixteen. A "religious" service on a Sunday afternoon in a timber grove. A traveling preacher (there were practically no resident ministers in southern Indiana in those years) is shouting, sobbing, wringing his hands, and generally going on an emotional spree. He so stirs the scores of farm men and women who have gathered in the place that a kind of mob hysteria takes possession of many of them, especially the women. They moan, tremble, dance up and down, and shriek until they fall exhausted and are "laid out" to recover under the shade of the trees. Young Abe Lincoln looks on, sober of face, quiet in heart, and very thoughtful. He is not unsympathetic to religion as he has known it in the gentle, self-sacrificing Nancy Hanks and in the kindly ministrations of his stepmother. He has read the Bible, too, in part, and caught something of its passion for justice, mercy, and humility. But this sort of thing—and it is typical

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

of most of the religious meetings he sees—he can make nothing of. Perplexed and wondering, he turns away and walks home in silence.

At Seventeen. Four men with poles have gathered on a neighboring farm to lift a new corn crib and place it where the owner wants it. Abe by this time is a tall, rawboned youth with heavy shoulder muscles and a powerful back. He looks at the crib, then at the four men. His eyes twinkle, and a quiet smile plays around his straight mouth. Saying nothing to the onlookers, he crawls under the crib, gets the weight of it across his shoulders, and carries it without aid to its new foundation. A few days later he performs the same feat with a chicken house weighing six hundred pounds. It is not the ax alone which has thus strengthened his muscles. He has taken an active part in the sports of the neighborhood—running, jumping, pole vaulting, and wrestling—and he has “hired out” his labor to other farmers in their seasons of heaviest work. For this labor he has received thirty-one cents a day—and the development of the strongest physique in a community of strong men.

At Eighteen. Abe is on a new little flatboat of his own construction loaded with farm produce which he is taking down the river to sell at New Orleans. A steamer is coming down the river. On the shore stand two men with trunks. There is no wharf, the custom being for travelers to go out in a boat, the steamer

MEN OF POWER

stopping to take them on board. The men single out Abe's boat.

"Who owns this?" one of them asks.

"I do," answers Abe not too modestly, for he is proud of his handiwork.

"Will you take us and our trunks out to the steamer?"

"Certainly."

Glad of the chance to earn something Abe sculls them and their luggage to midstream. The steamer stops, they board it, and Abe carries their trunks to its deck. As the steamer is about to start, he calls from his flatboat that they have forgotten to pay him. Each man takes from his pocket a silver half-dollar and tosses it to the floor of Abe's boat. The boy can hardly believe his eyes. It is the first dollar he has ever earned.

"You may think it a very little thing," said Lincoln long afterward as he told the story to Seward, "but it was a most important incident in my life. I could scarcely credit that I, a poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day—that by honest work I had earned a dollar. The world seemed wider and fairer before me. I was a more hopeful and confident being from that time."

At Thirteen to Eighteen. No picture of the growing boy is complete that leaves out the influence of loneliness upon his formative years. He is alone more often than he is with persons. A typical day of this sort finds him in the woods with his ax. He swings it into a tough hickory, or black walnut, or oak, and chops

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

away at it until the tree falls. Then to rest himself he sits upon the log and listens to the cries of the partridges, crows, hawks, and turkeys, or watches the scampering brown and gray squirrels. In summer he stretches his gangling form upon the ground and looks at the clouds—and dreams. Sometimes he talks to himself, but neither he nor anyone else has shared with the world the substance of those soliloquies. More often he is silent, listening and thinking. As Carl Sandburg puts it, "Silence found him: he met silence. In the making of him as he was, the element of silence was immense."

At Twenty-one. Abe has come to New Orleans with a flatboat cargo of merchandise in behalf of a trader named Offut—of whom more later. He has had exciting adventures along the way, on one occasion having to fight a gang of thieves attempting to steal the cargo and kill the crew. From that fight he is to carry for the rest of his life a scar over his right eye. But he has finally arrived and is now walking with two companions about the city observing its strange sights. Among them are posted advertisements of slaves for sale. One notice reads:

We have now on hand, and intend to keep throughout the entire year, a large and well-selected stock of Negroes, consisting of field hands, house servants, mechanics, cooks, seamstresses, washers, ironers, etc., which we can sell and will sell as low or lower than any other house here or in New Orleans.

MEN OF POWER

And another :

For sale—several likely girls from 10 to 18 years old, a woman 24, a very valuable woman 25, with three very likely children. . . .

In their ramblings Lincoln and his two friends come upon a slave auction. He sees a vigorous and shapely mulatto girl on the block, the bidders giving her a thorough examination, pinching her flesh, and making her trot up and down like a horse, in order, as the auctioneer says, that "bidders might satisfy themselves" whether or not she is thoroughly sound.

As Lincoln and his friends watch the revolting scene, he feels within himself "an unconquerable hate." Turning to his companions he says, "Boys, let's get away from this. If ever I get a chance to hit that thing, I'll hit it hard." ²

At Twenty-two. New Salem, Illinois. Restless Tom Lincoln has moved his family from Indiana to southern Illinois, first to a farm in Macon County, and some months later to one in Coles County. After helping them get settled on this second farm, Abe has accepted the offer of Denton Offut, a hard-drinking and visionary trader, to clerk in a new general store he is about to establish some miles away at New Salem, on the

² These words are attributed to Lincoln by a widespread tradition; but the most reliable of his biographers (Beveridge, Stephenson, Sandburg, and others) omit this remark, contending that his serious opposition to slavery was a growing thing and did not reach the stage of conviction until he was in his forties.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Sangamon River. Abe happens to arrive on election day. At the voting place he hears that a clerk who can read and write is needed. Someone asks the tall stranger if he qualifies. He drawls, "Oh, I guess I can make a few rabbit tracks."

So all day long he meets the citizens of New Salem and records their votes, for most of them cannot write. He cracks jokes, tells stories; and before night word goes around the village that this newcomer is a droll fellow and a friendly sort. Offut declares, "He knows more than any man in the U. S. Some day he will be president. He can outrun, outlift, outwrestle, and throw down any man in Sangamon County."

The latter part of this boast is the only portion that interests the male population. There is a first-rate wrestler in the neighborhood, Jack Armstrong by name, champion of the Clary's Grove Boys. Bill Clary owns a saloon only a few rods from the Offut store. He proposes to Offut a bet of \$10 that Lincoln can't throw Jack Armstrong. Offut takes the bet, and a date for the match is agreed upon.

When the day arrives a great crowd of pioneer farmers from fifty miles around gathers on the land next the Offut store to see the match. Armstrong has a powerful build but is short. Lincoln is taller, has a longer reach, but his muscles seem thinner. They grapple, Armstrong endeavoring to get in close to Abe so that he can crush him with those powerful muscles.

MEN OF POWER

Abe holds him off and wears him down until Armstrong is out of breath and out of temper. In a rage Armstrong stamps the heel of his boot upon Abe's instep. Angered, Abe grabs Armstrong by the throat, lifts him from the ground, shakes him like a rat, and slams him hard upon the earth. The Clary's Grove Boys now join the fray. Hurling epithets at Abe they begin to close in upon him. He gets his back to a wall and challenges them to come on. They are about to rush at him when Armstrong rises, pushes his way through his supporters, and extends his hand to Abe. "He beat me fair," he declares; "he's the best feller that ever broke into this settlement."

This settles the matter. Lincoln has made good in his new home. From now on he is accepted as leader of their games and sports. The one thing they do not understand is why such a good fellow won't join them in drinking whiskey. In this respect they count him "peculiarsome."

At Twenty-two. The day's business is done at the Offut store. Lincoln is reckoning up the accounts. He finds he has charged one woman six and a quarter cents too much for the dry goods she has bought. That evening he walks six miles to her house to pay it back.

Another day he discovers he has given a woman short weight on some tea. Measuring out the amount due her and wrapping it in a paper he carries it some distance to her home.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Folks around New Salem begin to call him "Honest Abe."

On still another day, when women are in the store, the village bully makes himself offensive by loud profanity. Lincoln asks him to keep quiet. The bully says he won't and nobody can make him. Lincoln chases him into the road, grabs a handful of smartweed, and rubs it in the bully's face. "That fellow Lincoln is nobody to trifle with," the neighbors say.

At Twenty-two. An evening in New Salem. The store has closed for the day; the settlers have retired to their cabins for the night. Abe Lincoln sits in the blacksmith shop studying a textbook of grammar by the light of burning shavings on the forge. He has walked twelve miles—six miles each way—to borrow this book from a farmer. Abe has had, all told, less than a year of schooling. He hungers for more, but he is too old now to enrol in the village school. He must get his education as best he can by himself. He has read such books as he could lay hands on—Aesop's *Fables*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the *Bible*, Weems's *Washington* and *Franklin*, and not more than half a dozen others. "The things I want to know are in books," he has said. "My best friend is the man who'll get me a book I ain't read." He has recognized the vast difference between the language of these books and the lingo he uses, picked up from the pioneers whose daily life he shares. One secret of that difference, he thinks, may be in grammar. Therefore, he'll learn

MEN OF POWER

grammar and make his language more like that of the books he loves.

Next day at the store he has Bill Green hold the book and ask him questions.

"What do adverbs qualify?" queries Bill.

"Adverbs," answers Abe, "qualify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs."

"What is a phrase?"

"A phrase is an assemblage of words, not constituting an entire proposition, but performing a distinct office in the structure of a sentence."

And so the process of self-education goes laboriously on.

Offut, the owner of the store, drinks up its profits and ruins the business in a few months; but Abe comes out of these months with a knowledge of words and how to use them to express clearly and correctly the ideas germinating in his head.

At Twenty-three. Abe is making his first campaign for a political office. The Offut store has failed, and he is out of a job. Some of his friends have urged him to run for the state legislature, not because they think he has a chance of being elected, but rather because it "would bring him prominently before the people and in time would do him good." Thoughtfully, he has worked out his platform. He advocates better school facilities, improving the channel of the Sangamon River, a law against exorbitant interest rates, and

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

various other practical benefits needed by the settlers of the district.

He makes his first stump speech before a crowd which has gathered at a hog auction. As he mounts a box, about to begin, he notices that a fight has started on the outskirts of the crowd and that one of his own friends seems to be getting the worst of it. He steps off the box, pushes his way to the fighters, picks up the offender by the scruff of the neck and seat of the trousers, and hurls him ten feet for a fall. Returning to the box as if nothing unusual has happened, he makes his speech, closing with these words: "If the good people in their wisdom shall see fit to keep me in the background, I have been too familiar with disappointments to be very much chagrined."

The good people do see fit to keep him in the background. He runs seventh in a field of twelve candidates. It is but the first of many political defeats. Nevertheless, he finds more than a little comfort in that in his own precinct of New Salem he receives 277 of the 300 votes cast. Those who know him best have confidence in him.

At Twenty-three. A scene in the Black Hawk Indian War. During the early part of the political campaign just described Chief Black Hawk and his tribe invaded Illinois and attacked the settlers. These Indians had earlier signed away their land to the United States government and had moved westward across the Mississippi River. But now the old chief con-

MEN OF POWER

ceived the advanced idea that land cannot be sold. "The great spirit gave it to his children to live upon. . . . Nothing can be sold but such things as can be carried away," he declared. So with his warriors he returned to the land of their fathers, burned villages, scalped settlers, and generally spread terror.

In this crisis the citizens of Illinois decide to raise volunteers to defend their lives and property. The volunteers of Sangamon County choose Lincoln as their captain. He has a difficult time getting them to accept military discipline. His first order is greeted by one of his men with a defiant, "You go to hell!" But in the course of a few weeks he has them under control, although among the other volunteer companies and those of the regular army Lincoln's contingent is known as "a hard set of men." Hard they certainly are, the Clary's Grove Boys being their nucleus.

Lincoln teaches them obedience to military discipline by submitting to it himself. On one occasion he is arrested and his sword taken away because he has fired a pistol within the camp area, violating the army regulation that no firearms should be discharged within fifty yards of the camp. On another, a court martial decrees that he carry a wooden sword for two days because some of the roughnecks of his company have broken into the officers' supplies, stolen whiskey, and drunk themselves into a stupor. Lincoln accepts his vicarious disgrace without protest.

One day an old Indian wanders into the camp.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Promptly some of Lincoln's company want to kill him. Have they not volunteered to kill Indians? Why not begin with this one? Lincoln jumps to the side of the wanderer, shows his men that the redskin has a military pass, and orders that he must not be harmed. One of the volunteers calls Lincoln a coward. "If any man thinks I'm a coward, let him test it," Lincoln answers. "But you're bigger and heavier than we are," argues one of his men. "You can guard against that; choose your weapons," Lincoln challenges. No one cares to accept that challenge. The anger of the mob cools, and the men drift away.

Lincoln's company at no time comes into actual combat with the marauding Indians. Chief Black Hawk is soon captured, and his warriors flee to the west.

At Twenty-four. Back in New Salem after the Black Hawk War and the election, Lincoln has formed a partnership with William Berry. The two are running a general store, but without much success, for Berry drinks heavily and plays poker disastrously. One day a covered wagon headed west draws up at the door. Its owner needs money. He asks Lincoln to buy for half a dollar an old barrel which crowds the family in the wagon. He says it contains nothing of special value. Lincoln does not want it, but, taking pity on the traveler, pays him the half-dollar. Without further examination of the barrel he puts it away in the store and forgets about it. Some weeks later, overhaul-

MEN OF POWER

ing his stock, he comes upon it, empties it upon the floor, and finds at the bottom a complete edition of Blackstone's *Commentaries*—the work a lawyer friend has told him is the most important for the beginning of the study of law. In the weeks that follow, when the farmers are busy with their crops, his partner with drinking and poker, Lincoln pores over Blackstone.

At Twenty-four. A black year for Lincoln. The firm of Berry and Lincoln is failing. Berry is drinking heavily, and Lincoln is neither salesman nor collector. On days when business is dull a real merchant cudgels his brain to revive it, but Lincoln leans on the counter and reads Blackstone's *Commentaries*, Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*. For relaxation in the evenings, before sundown, he plays marbles with the young boys or pitches horseshoes with the older ones. Some days he closes the store and wanders down to the river to watch his fisherman friend Jack Kelso and listen to him recite Shakespeare. At night and before breakfast in the morning he reads—history, poetry, fiction, essays—anything he can lay his hands on.

As a result, although his education enlarges, his meager income contracts. His debts pile up. They worry him sick. He takes on odd jobs of splitting rails, or helping in harvest fields and sawmill. Money is scarce, wages low, and he is usually paid in deerskins or potatoes or meat. His debts mount higher. He takes on the job of postmaster, partly because no one

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

else wants it (the salary is microscopic), and partly because it gives him a chance to read the newspapers and their accounts of the exciting debates between Webster and Hayne and many others on the questions of slavery and secession. Mail comes but once a week, and he carries it in his hat until called for. The business continues to ebb and is finally sold to the Trent brothers who give promissory notes in payment. Berry drinks himself to death; the Trent brothers leave town for parts unknown, jumping their notes; and Lincoln is left with the store's debts as well as his own—an aggregate of \$1,100. He might slip quietly away as many another bankrupt has done, but he decides to stick it out. He does not know now that it will be twenty years before he can make full payment. He knows only that he must pay those debts—every dollar.

He hears of a job as surveyor's deputy and walks twenty miles to Springfield to get it. Returning, he borrows a book, *The Theory and Practice of Surveying*, and with the aid of the New Salem schoolmaster and much midnight oil acquires in six weeks the fundamentals of the new job. It pays him approximately three dollars a day when he works—but assignments are not plentiful. He must have a horse and surveying instruments. He buys them; but a little later he is sued for one of his debts, and the horse, saddle, bridle, and instruments are taken from him to be sold at public auction. Too sick at heart and humiliated, he does not attend the sale. But now comes a flash of sunlight

MEN OF POWER

through the dark clouds of his despair. A farmer for whom he has worked, one James Short, hearing of Lincoln's plight, buys in the whole outfit for \$125 and gives it back to Lincoln. Struggling hard to keep his voice steady, the bankrupt young man thanks him, "Uncle Jimmy, I'll do as much for you some day."

No, the year is not altogether black.

At Twenty-six. A scene of stark tragedy. In a little cemetery seven miles from New Salem, Lincoln lies prostrate upon the ground, one arm across the fresh earth of the new-made grave of Ann Rutledge. He has loved her as he will never love another woman. For a few happy months they have been engaged, have dreamed their dreams together, have lifted the dark horizons of the present to peer into a roseate future when she will enrol in a girl's seminary and he in the new Illinois College at Jacksonville, and after that—marriage, their own home, and a new world to conquer. She has believed in him, sure that his sterling character will some day come into its own. Her faith in him has sustained him through the darkest hours of his failure in business. Spurred by her confidence he has again run for legislature, this time endorsed by both Democrats and Whigs, and been elected. But a new pestilence—malaria—has swept through the community, and in its wake lies his beloved Ann.

For weeks Lincoln cannot regain his poise. His friends surround him with their inarticulate affection, watch his movements lest he do himself some harm, try

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

to lift his mind to the work and play of daily life. They take him, at the doctor's advice, to the home of his friends, Bowling and Nancy Green, where he may rest. Daytimes he helps about the farm, chopping wood, picking apples, and digging potatoes. But when evening comes and his hands are idle, he sits staring into the fire, as if searching among the flames of the burning logs for the lines of a face he will not see again. Useless in these hours to ask him questions. He hears none. His mind is on that sorrowful search.

One night as he sits there a storm rages about the house and rain beats upon the roof. He goes to the door, opens it, peers into the blackness, and comes back saying, "I can't bear to think of her out there alone."

In these tortured days a sadness comes into his deep-set eyes, a burning sadness that is never to leave them.

At Twenty-seven. Lincoln is a candidate to succeed himself in the state legislature. His candidacy has been attacked by George Forquer, a lawyer who has switched from Whig to Democrat and been rewarded with a political plum—the office of Register of Land, at a salary of \$3,000 a year. He has built for himself a new house in Springfield and has installed upon it the first lightning rod seen in this section of Illinois. A large crowd of farmers has gathered around the house to stare at the strange invention. Lincoln takes advantage of the occasion and makes a political speech in his own behalf. Forquer promptly answers Lincoln,

MEN OF POWER

calling him a "young man who needed to be taken down." Lincoln now steps to the stand again and makes a rebuttal speech, closing with these words:

Mr. Forquer commenced his speech by announcing that the young man would have to be taken down. It is for you fellow citizens, not for me, to say whether I am up or down. The gentleman has seen fit to allude to my being a young man; but he forgets that I am older in years than I am in the tricks and trades of politicians. I desire to live, and I desire place and distinction; but I would rather die now than, like the gentleman, live to see the day that I would change my politics for an office worth \$3,000 a year, and then feel compelled to erect a lightning rod to protect a guilty conscience from an offended God.

His friends carry him away on their shoulders while men in the dispersing crowd comment: "That fellow Lincoln hits hard, doesn't he?" "Yep. He's too hot for some of these older politicians to handle. Guess we'd better give him another term."

They re-elect him. Back in the legislature, Lincoln becomes a leader of the "Long Nine"—a group of nine Whigs, each of them over six feet and weighing more than two hundred pounds. Together they work for vast improvement projects—railroads, river navigation schemes, better mail service, school extension, etc. They meet with the opposition of powerful vested interests and of reactionary politicians, and much of their program fails of passage. (Had it all carried it might

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

have bankrupt the state.) Much "log-rolling" takes place, and Lincoln is not averse to this political practice so long as his principles are not violated. But on one occasion after the legislature has wrangled day and night over a bill proposed by the "Long Nine" to move the state capital from Vandalia to Springfield, he is told that certain members will vote for this bill if he will give his vote for a measure which he has thus far opposed on principle. It is past midnight of the second night session when Lincoln, weary and worn from withstanding the incessant political pressure upon him, rises and gives his answer, "You may burn my body to ashes, and scatter them to the winds of heaven; you may drag my soul down to the regions of darkness and despair to be tormented forever; but you will never get me to support a measure which I believe to be wrong, although by doing so I may accomplish that which I believe to be right."

The "Long Nine" stand by their guns and their leader, and their bill finally passes.

At Twenty-eight. Lincoln, with only seven dollars in his pocket and mounted on a borrowed horse, rides into Springfield one day in March, 1837, to begin the practice of law in the new firm of Stuart and Lincoln. He pulls up at the general store of Joshua Speed and inquires the cost of bed, mattress, and bedding. "Seventeen dollars," figures Mr. Speed. Lincoln's face grows longer and more melancholy as he answers, "I can't pay so much, but if you will wait until Christmas,

MEN OF POWER

and I make any money, I'll pay up; if I don't, I can't." How else can he speak, remembering his debts back in New Salem? Mr. Speed has never seen so gloomy and mournful a face on a young man. Instead of trying to make a sale to the burdened young lawyer he invites him to share his own bed in the room above the store. Lincoln accepts, carries his saddlebags upstairs, and comes down smiling. "Well, I've moved," he says.

A friend, Bill Butler, one of the "Long Nine," invites Lincoln to board at his house—and not to worry about paying for his meals.

Thus the young ex-storekeeper and surveyor begins his professional life. His cases are petty, his fees small. Like other country lawyers he follows the judges on their circuit from county seat to county seat, arguing cases before them, spinning yarns around the stoves in cheap taverns and wretched courthouses, but all the time making new friends, learning their troubles and how they are thinking on the social and political issues of the day. When no cases are pending and work in the office drags, he takes on odd jobs splitting rails and sawing wood. Those debts must be paid somehow.

At Thirty. In the midst of a hot political campaign between Democrats and Whigs the latter are holding a meeting in a courtroom just under Lincoln's law office. A Whig speaker, Edward D. Baker, charges that the Democrats in control of the state land offices at the time have been grafting; further, that the Democratic newspapers have protected them. The Democrats in

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

the audience, angered by these accusations, begin to shout, "Pull him down!" and make for the platform. A riot is starting. Suddenly, the eyes of everyone are arrested by the opening of a trap door in the ceiling. Through it descend first the long legs, then the body of Lincoln, from his office above. Dropping to the floor he calls for order, saying, "Hold on, gentlemen! This is a land of free speech. Baker has a right to say what he thinks. If you take him off the stand, you'll have to take me, too."

No one cares to tackle the champion wrestler; so the meeting proceeds.

At Thirty-one. Lincoln as lawyer for the defense in a murder trial is cross-examining the prosecution's chief witness, a man named Sovine. Lincoln's client is young Grayson, who is charged with shooting a man named Lockwood during a campmeeting. Sovine, the only eye witness of the actual shooting, has sworn that he saw Grayson fire the fatal shot, then run from the scene. The evidence seems so strong against Grayson that on two occasions since the murder he has come very near being lynched. At the trial Lincoln has paid little attention to other prosecution witnesses, allowing their statements to go unchallenged. Grayson's mother cannot understand why her son's lawyer has been silent so long. But now the prosecution rests, and Lincoln faces Sovine and begins to ask questions.

Lincoln: "And you were with Lockwood just before and saw the shooting?"

MEN OF POWER

Witness: "Yes."

Lincoln: "And you stood very near to them?"

Witness: "No, it was twenty feet or more."

Lincoln: "In the open field?"

Witness: "No, in the timber."

Lincoln: "What kind of timber?"

Witness: "Beech timber."

Lincoln: "Leaves on it are rather thick in August!"

Witness: "It looks like it."

Lincoln: "You could see defendant shoot—see how the barrel hung, and all about it?"

Witness: "Yes."

Lincoln: "Where were the lights?"

Witness: "Up by the minister's stand."

Lincoln: "Three-quarters of a mile away?"

Witness: "Yes."

Lincoln: "Did you not see a candle there, with Lockwood or Grayson?"

Witness: "No. what'd we want a candle for?"

Lincoln: "How, then, did you see the shooting?"

Witness: "By moonlight!" (Defiantly.)

Lincoln: "You saw the shooting at 10 o'clock at night—in beech timber, three-quarters of a mile from the lights—saw the pistol barrel—saw the man fire—saw it twenty feet away—saw it all by moonlight? Saw it nearly a mile from the camp lights?"

Witness: "Yes, I told you so before." ³

³ Quoted by Emanuel Hertz: *Lincoln Talks*, The Viking Press, New York, 1939, pp. 24, 25.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The packed courtroom listens breathlessly. Deliberately Lincoln draws from his side pocket an almanac, offers it to the court and the jury as evidence, then reads from a page with slow emphasis the statement that there was no moon on that night until its rising at one o'clock the following morning. With this clinching argument Lincoln now moves for the arrest of Sovine as the real murderer, saying, "Nothing but a motive to clear himself could have induced him to swear away so falsely the life of one who never did him harm."

Sovine, arrested, breaks down and confesses that he fired the fatal shot himself.

At Thirty-two. A year of black wretchedness not far removed from insanity for Lincoln. Three incidents of this year are important for an understanding of the man who emerges from it. The first is his engagement to Mary Todd. He has met her in the sumptuous home of his friend Ninian Edwards, her brother-in-law and the son of the governor of Illinois. Mary, an ambitious, highstrung girl of twenty-two, is a member of the aristocratic Todd family of Virginia and Kentucky. Vivid, modish, and cultured, she has many suitors. Loving power and prestige, she intends that her lot shall be cast with some man in high position. In fact, she has often contended that she will be the wife of some future president of the United States. She has come to the Edwards home resolved to make the most of the opportunities it affords for meeting young men rising in political life. Her calculating eye

MEN OF POWER

has weighed their respective prospects. With uncanny intuition and shrewdness she has finally selected Abraham Lincoln as the young man most likely to become president. Her sister, Mrs. Edwards, shocked at this choice of the awkward and low-born country lawyer, tries to dissuade her, but without success.

Mary sets her cap for Lincoln, entertaining him and Stephen A. Douglas on alternate evenings, and playing one against the other. Lincoln finds her a most exciting young woman, utterly different from any he has ever known. He has little to say in her presence; but as he listens to her gay and witty and often sagacious patter, his ambition kindles. She makes him believe, for the moment at least, that he has powers of achievement far greater than he has ever dared dream of. In the course of a few months he has come completely under her charm, and almost before he knows it the wedding date is set for the evening of January 1, 1841.

The second incident is his failure to appear for the wedding. In the intervening weeks he has gone through the bitterest of inner conflicts. Can he, a soil-born son of lazy and shiftless Tom Lincoln, ever be anything but a drag upon this brilliant and aristocratic woman? With his burden of debt can he offer her anything but poverty? Does he love her, or she him, enough to make a happy marriage for either of them? Seeking the answer to such questions he wanders alone in the woods, neglecting his work, but finding no peace. Some days before the wedding date he writes a letter

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

to Mary confessing his sense of inadequacy. He asks his friend Joshua Speed to deliver it. But Joshua burns the letter and tells Lincoln that the only honest thing to do is to go to Mary and tell her to her face exactly how he feels about the marriage. Lincoln goes. But when he tells her she bursts into tears and talks wildly about "the deceiver being himself deceived." Thereupon Lincoln melts, takes her in his arms, kisses her, and finally departs, re-engaged to the determined girl. However, when the wedding day comes he fails to appear. His friends search for him throughout the night and find him at dawn in a pitiable state of collapse.

For weeks thereafter he is in an agony of self-reproach and despair. Some of his friends declare that he is insane. Joshua Speed fears he will kill himself and sees to it that "knives, razors, and every instrument of self-destruction, are removed from his reach." Although Lincoln is a member of the state legislature at this time, he seldom takes his place among his colleagues there and contributes nothing to their discussions. In a letter to his partner Stuart in Washington he writes, "I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on the earth. Whether I shall ever be better, I cannot tell; I awfully forebode I shall not. . . ."

Soon after Stuart receives this letter the partnership is dissolved. To add to his loneliness Speed sells his store and moves to Louisville. Bereft of his best

MEN OF POWER

friends, unable to work, criticized by everyone for his desertion of Mary, tortured by his own sense of failure, Lincoln is a tragic figure, a desolate soul, "a dweller in the dark places of affliction." Realizing his nearness to complete mental disintegration, he writes a long letter to a famous physician, Dr. Daniel Drake of Cincinnati, asking for his opinion and a course of treatment; but the doctor declines to diagnose or prescribe without a personal examination.

The third incident is his eventual recovery through the kindly ministrations of Joshua Speed and his family. Hearing of Lincoln's condition, Speed urges him to come to them in their home near Louisville to rest. Lincoln accepts and in August goes to the Speed mansion. For the first time in his life he lives in a home of comfort, even luxury, in a company of refined and gracious people who live tranquilly. Joshua and his mother and sister and a happy little girl, Eliza Davis, all Southerners of good breeding and gentle manners, surround him with affectionate care and seek to nurse him back to health. No easy task; for often he is so depressed that he contemplates suicide. But as the weeks pass the shadows gradually lift from his mind and the fear from his heart. In mid-September he returns to Springfield with revived courage, ready for a new wrestling bout with life.

At Thirty-three. On November 4, 1842, in the parlor of the Edwards home in Springfield, before a

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

few friends hastily summoned on a three or four hours' notice, Lincoln and Mary Todd are being married.

In the months since his return from Joshua Speed's home in Louisville, Lincoln has tried to forget his troubles in work. He has formed a partnership with Stephen T. Logan, a distinguished lawyer who has taught him more law and professional thoroughness than he has known before. But neither work nor the satisfaction of making progress in his profession can shake from Lincoln's mind its burden of remorse over the way he has treated Mary Todd. Doubt and duty, pride and pity war within him. One day a friend, a Mrs. Francis who has reconciled other couples successfully, invites him to her home to meet a young woman she assures him he will like. Accepting the invitation, he is brought face to face with Mary Todd again. The meeting is as much a surprise for Mary as for Lincoln. Explanations follow, their friendship is renewed, and after some months of frequent clandestine meetings, they again become engaged. Fearing the effect of postponement, the wedding is arranged without delay.

Immediately after the wedding the Lincolns take up their abode at the Globe Tavern, where they live for more than a year, paying four dollars a week for their room and board. Here begins Lincoln's "continuous and life-long tutelage in humility for his wife soon unchains that temper which grows more savage through the years," a temper which leads her physician to believe that she is the victim of a "cerebral disease."

MEN OF POWER

At Thirty-four. One day in September, 1843, Lincoln in considerable agitation comes running out of the office of Logan and Lincoln. The partners have fallen out. The details we do not know, but the two men have been incompatible in temperament. Logan is scrupulously exact, orderly, and formal; Lincoln inexact, slipshod, and informal. They may have differed also in politics. Whatever the cause, they have agreed to dissolve the partnership. Lincoln comes straight to his young liberal friend, William Herndon, nine years his junior. "Billy," he says, "Will you be my partner?" The young lawyer, who has adored Lincoln since he first saw him upon his arrival in New Salem, thinks this must be another joke; but Lincoln insists he is serious. Herndon starts to stammer his joy and to ask questions about the terms of a partnership. "I can trust you if you can trust me, Billy," answers Lincoln.

Thus begins the firm of Lincoln and Herndon—without formal contract or legal ceremony of any kind. The partnership continues, unbroken and with never a quarrel, until Lincoln's death.

Meanwhile Lincoln, urged by his wife, seeks to advance his political fortunes, but without success. His opponents make the most of the fact that he has married an aristocrat and is no longer "a man of the people." They also brand him as an "infidel" because he has not joined a church and because they have discovered him reading the rationalists, Paine and Volney. To

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

such accusations what reply can an honest man make? He *has* married an aristocrat, and a decent loyalty to her prevents discussion of the point. As for religion he is not an infidel. Ethically and mystically he is a Christian; dogmatically he doesn't know what he is, but he refuses to drag religion into political argument. Paine and Volney? Yes, he has read them, and Shakespeare and Byron, too—in fact every important writer he can lay his hands on. Their ideas about life and liberty and democracy are germinating deep within him. Some day they may flower—but he cannot hurry them. For the present there is nothing to do but to plod on as a lawyer, riding circuit with the judges, trying small cases, and settling as many as he can out of court to save his clients money. Between times he discusses with his neighbors the vital issues of the day: the troubles in Texas, the growing threat of secession, the Missouri Compromise, the expanding West.

At Thirty-seven. Lincoln is a candidate for Congress. His opponent is the famous pioneer preacher, Peter Cartwright, who “combines revivals with campaigning.” One evening in the midst of the campaign Lincoln attends a church in Springfield where Cartwright is preaching. As the sermon draws to a climax Cartwright exhorts, “all who desire to lead a new life, to give their hearts to God, and to go to heaven” to stand. Several men, women, and children rise. Cartwright continues: “All who do not wish to go to hell will stand.” The remainder of the congregation rises

MEN OF POWER

—all except Lincoln. Cartwright fixes his eye upon the seemingly recalcitrant lawyer. "I observe," he says, "that many responded to the first invitation to give their hearts to God and go to heaven. And I further observe that all of you save one indicated that you did not desire to go to hell. The sole exception is Mr. Lincoln, who did not respond to either invitation. May I inquire of you, Mr. Lincoln, where you are going?"

Lincoln rises slowly and replies: "I came here as a respectful listener. I did not know I was to be singled out by Brother Cartwright. I believe in treating religious matters with due solemnity. I admit the questions propounded by Brother Cartwright are of great importance. I did not feel called upon to answer as the rest did. Brother Cartwright asks me directly where I am going. I desire to reply with equal directness. I am going to Congress."

He is right. By a substantial majority the voters elect him to the House of Representatives.

At Forty. He has had his term in Congress—and returned to Springfield with a sense of utter failure. Certainly he has not distinguished himself. He has voted with his party, delivered a few speeches almost trifling in substance, and made no impression whatever on Webster or Clay or any other of the political leaders of the day. To be sure, he has been popular for his story-telling and his homely and friendly way of talking, but these have earned him nothing more than the

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

reputation of being a good fellow and a pleasant companion.

In his home district of Springfield the people have seen these surface traits against a background of the inner Lincoln—the man who has struggled long against poverty and debt and kept his integrity, who has educated himself, developed skill as a lawyer, and been ever eager to help the friendless. But Washington politicians have neither seen nor sought to discover this inner Lincoln. And being the man he is, he has not been able to advertise to his fellow congressmen what the home folks have known about him from their own observation. Washington has seen only the surface Lincoln—six feet four inches tall, awkward, crude, unkempt, and completely unpolished. It likes him, after a fashion, but no one thinks of him as a man of power. Perhaps Washington is a bit obtuse. At any rate, even his Whig friends at home feel that he has made so poor a showing that they do not see fit to renominate him. "I've committed political suicide," he tells Herndon—and settles down, as he thinks, to the practice of law for the rest of his life. He's forty and a failure. The future stretches before him dismal as a desert.

He has one ray of comfort in his misery: he has saved enough from his salary as congressman to pay off the last of his New Salem debts.

Now comes a tempting offer. From Washington he receives the proffer of a political plum—the gover-

MEN OF POWER

norship of the new Territory of Oregon. Perhaps out there in a new country he can make a fresh start, far away from this graveyard of his hopes. The blood of roving Tom Lincoln stirs to such a prospect. Lincoln listens, ponders, wavers.

But Mary Todd Lincoln, shrewd and intuitive as ever, and even more determined, says *No!* She—and he—will stay right here. They have only begun to fight. Go out to a wild and woolly country not yet civilized, not even a state? Nonsense! Their family is here, their friends are here, their political experience is here, and here the Lincolns will remain until called to something higher. So Lincoln tightens his belt and plunges again into law and local politics, resolved to make the best of them.

At Forty-five. Five years have passed. National issues have grown sharper. The country has expanded at a furious rate, and with the expansion have come sectional and commercial rivalries. The Central West, the Northwest, the Southwest, and the Far West all want markets and railroads. Eastern capital wants to finance them—and to gain huge profits in the process. Eastern capital is already financing the South and its agricultural economy based on slavery, and finding it a gold mine. If slavery can be extended to the new states and territories of the West, the profits will be multiplied. The less money for labor, the more for capital. Robber barons are in the saddle and riding high. Congress seethes with the machinations of money

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

lenders, slaveholders, and railway promoters with their beguiling plans for "prosperity." The old Jeffersonian principles of democracy and freedom seem out of date; they produce slim dividends. The Abolitionists, of course, are highly vocal; but they are the "radicals" of the day, too impractical for the serious consideration of the hard-headed "realists" of commerce.

Out of all this welter one man has risen to whom the magnates of the lately-born "Big Business" turn as their hope for a leader who can persuade the people to see things in the proper light—Stephen A. Douglas. Douglas' star has been rising ever since his election to the Senate as a Democrat in the same year Lincoln went to the House as a Whig. Douglas has made good while Lincoln has failed. Small, almost tiny, of stature, Douglas is brilliant, facile, polished, and extraordinarily quick. To his constituents in Illinois he is the popular orator who pays eloquent homage to Jefferson and the founding fathers; to his colleagues in the Senate he is the aristocrat laboring to advance the financial interests of Big Business. To both he is "The Little Giant."

Douglas sincerely believes that the ultimate welfare of the country is tied up with the prosperity of its commercial leaders, that the slavery question will settle itself if let alone, and that his task as a politician is to pave the way for business expansion. To this end he has sponsored the so-called "Nebraska Bill," which in effect would repeal the Missouri Compromise and per-

MEN OF POWER

mit the extension of slavery into new territories. This bill not only has drawn the fire of the Abolitionists, which he has expected and discounted, but has raised a storm of protest from Douglas' constituents in Illinois, who begin to denounce him as a Judas to the cause of democracy. He hurries home to explain matters and to set the voters right.

At this juncture the people of Illinois look about for someone who can explain things to Douglas. How about Abe Lincoln? He may be only a lanky backwoods lawyer, but he knows how to make articulate and forceful their attitudes and feelings. He has been saying of late that the rights of men are in danger before this rising clamor for the rights of wealth. Humanity, he has contended, must not be sacrificed for prosperity, especially the prosperity of the few. He has come out clearly against slavery, not on the religious grounds of the Abolitionists, but as one convinced that the institution is contrary to the best interests of the nation, the whites as well as the blacks. Moreover, any form of slavery is incompatible with the "white man's charter of freedom"—the declaration that "all men are created free and equal." In a recent speech, he has put the whole matter in terms as simple as these:

If A can prove, however, conclusively, that he may of right enslave B, why may not B snatch the same argument and prove equally that he may enslave A? You say A is white and B is black. It is color then; the lighter having the right to enslave the darker?

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Take care. By this rule you are to be slave to the first man you meet with a fairer skin than your own. You do not mean color exactly? You mean the whites are intellectually the superiors of the blacks, and therefore have the right to enslave them? Take care again. By this rule you are to be slave to the first man you meet with an intellect superior to your own. But, you say, it is a question of interest, and if you make it your interest, you have the right to enslave another. Very well. And if he can make it his interest, he has the right to enslave you.

This crystal-clear statement has appealed to the common sense of the citizens of Illinois, including the constituents of Douglas. Yes, Abe Lincoln is their man to answer "The Little Giant."

On October 16, 1854, Douglas, before a great crowd at Peoria, defends his "Nebraska Bill" on the ground that it allows the people of the new territories to determine for themselves whether or not they shall have slavery. Isn't that democratic? Isn't that right? Lincoln answers—and the speech marks a new epoch of power in his life—

I think, and shall try to show, that it is wrong—wrong in its direct effect, letting slavery into Kansas and Nebraska, and wrong in its prospective principle, allowing it to spread to every other part of the wide world where men can be found inclined to take it. . . .

Before proceeding let me say that I think I have no prejudice against the southern people. They are just what we would be in their situation. If slavery did

MEN OF POWER

not now exist among them, they would not introduce it. If it did now exist among us, we should not instantly give it up. This I believe of the masses North and South. . . .

Whether slavery shall go into Nebraska, or other new territories, is not a matter of exclusive concern to the people who may go there. The whole nation is interested that the best use shall be made of these territories. We want them for homes of free white people. This they cannot be, to any considerable extent, if slavery shall be planted within them. Slave states are places for poor white people to remove from, not to remove to. New free states are the places for poor people to go to, and better their condition. For this use the nation needs these territories.

Some men, mostly Whigs, who condemn the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, nevertheless hesitate to go for its restoration, lest they be thrown in company with the Abolitionists. Will they allow me, as an old Whig, to tell them, good-humoredly, that I think this is very silly? Stand with anybody that stands right. Stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong. Stand with the Abolitionist in restoring the Missouri Compromise, and stand against him when he attempts to repeal the fugitive-slave law. In the latter case you stand with the Southern disunionist. What of that? You are still right. In both cases you are right. In both cases you expose the dangerous extremes. In both you stand on middle ground, and hold the ship level and steady. In both you are national. . . .

Fellow-countrymen, Americans, South as well as North, shall we make no effort to arrest this? Already the liberal party throughout the world expresses the

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

apprehension "that the one retrograde institution in America is undermining the principles of progress, and fatally violating the noblest political system the world ever saw." This is not the taunt of enemies, but the warning of friends. Is it quite safe to disregard it—to despise it? Is there no danger to liberty itself in disregarding the earliest practice and first precept of our ancient faith? In our greedy chase to make profit of the negro, let us beware lest we "cancel and tear in pieces" even the white man's charter of freedom.

This great speech—and we have quoted but a fraction of it—echoes throughout the country. Newspapers in New York and Boston print extracts from it. His friends urge him to enter national politics again, this time to run for the Senate. He consents, makes a campaign for the nomination on the Whig ticket, but loses. Again he turns back to his law practice, adding one more to his long list of political failures.

At Forty-seven. At Bloomington, Illinois, a new political party—the Republican—is being inaugurated at a convention called for that purpose. It is composed of the "radicals" who have become dissatisfied with the temporizing and pussyfooting policies of the old parties. These men want to take an extreme stand against the extension of slavery. Earnest and sincere, they are ready to make genuine sacrifices for their cause; but like many come-outers they cling with such tenacity to their individual views as to the best methods

MEN OF POWER

to achieve their common aim that their unity and effectiveness are threatened.

At this point in their convention someone cries for a speech from Lincoln. The cry becomes a unanimous demand. Lincoln rises, comes to the platform, and begins. He speaks slowly and cautiously at first; but gradually his words seem to take wings, lifting his thought and the hearts of his hearers. Discord melts into harmony; personal ambitions dissolve into a common purpose of mutual aid. The great audience rises. Men with pale faces and quivering lips press forward as if drawn irresistibly to this new prophet. Even the reporters, accustomed by their training to witness unmoved scenes of popular emotion, drop their pencils and listen spellbound to what they afterward agree is the greatest oration they have ever heard. One of these reporters is Joseph Medill, later to become editor of the *Chicago Tribune*. As he leaves the room in a sort of hypnotic trance to send the story to his paper, he suddenly realizes that he has written nothing. Overwhelmed with dismay he turns to the other reporters and finds—not without some satisfaction—that every one of them has had the same experience.

Such is the occasion of "Lincoln's Lost Speech." No record of it is made in the incandescent moment of its delivery. Lincoln himself can never repeat it. It is one of those inspired utterances which come once in a generation, when the stars seem to pause in their courses and shed rays into some sensitive soul who

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

has struggled long and faithfully in the darkness seeking the light. All his defeats, all his reading of the Bible, Shakespeare, Byron, and the lives of Washington and Franklin, all his efforts to discipline himself in the art of expression, now come to fruition. He is a man of power. In his heart the heart of the people beats.

At Forty-nine. A critical year for Lincoln. An ever-widening circle of people throughout the country want to hear more of what he has to say—and his eloquent way of saying it. Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, has urged that the debates with Douglas on slavery and democracy be continued and that they be reported to the nation. Accepting this suggestion, Lincoln has challenged Douglas to a series of such debates. Douglas at first declines, saying in effect, "I am already a national figure, you an unknown; go out and get a reputation."

But the public clamor grows more insistent. Events of vital importance to the future of the country and of every citizen have followed one another in fierce succession—the rush of slaveholders to Kansas Territory to extend the slave system; the equally determined rush of Abolitionists to the same region to oppose them; the burning and sack of Lawrence by the pro-slavery party; the massacre by John Brown and his followers at Pottawatomie; the Dred Scott Decision of the Supreme Court, denying the right of the people of any territory to legislate on slavery and granting

MEN OF POWER

to slave owners the privilege of settling with their slaves wherever they please outside a free state. These and other episodes portend a national crisis approaching. Its issues must be discussed. Moreover, Douglas has his eye on the presidential election of 1860, when he hopes to be the standard-bearer for the Democratic Party. In the meantime, he knows that he must first win from the Illinois Legislature his own re-election to the Senate in the fall of this year, 1858. He knows who will oppose him for that election. It will be Lincoln at the head of the new Republican Party. He dare not evade this man now. Better to demolish him now and clear the way for the future. So "The Little Giant" finally decides to accept the challenge.

Seven debates, each of three hours, are held. All are in Illinois. Douglas rides to each of them in a private car on a special train provided gratis by the Illinois Central Railroad. Lincoln travels in ordinary coaches, even in the cabooses of freight trains. This difference in mode of travel symbolizes the difference in the men and their points of view. Both are sincere, both masters of oratory; but they champion political philosophies as wide apart as those which separated Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. Like Hamilton, Douglas is concerned primarily with the right of property and believes that the country will be more prosperous if the men of big business be allowed to run it with a comparatively free hand. Lincoln, like Jefferson, is concerned chiefly with human rights, and believes that

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

the ultimate welfare of the country depends upon the slow processes of democracy. To him a quick prosperity at the sacrifice of freedom is too dearly bought. Along these lines they argue in the greatest series of forensic battles America has ever known. Douglas tries to discredit Lincoln by implying that he wants social as well as political equality for all negroes—an amalgamation of the two races. Lincoln nails this in unmistakable terms.

I protest [he declares] against the counterfeit logic which says that because I do not want a black woman for a slave, I must necessarily want her for a wife. I need not have her for either. I can just leave her alone. In some respects she certainly is not my equal; but in her natural right to eat the bread she earns with her own hands without asking leave of anyone else, she is my equal and the equal of all others.

Turning from this defense he argues that Douglas' position of favoring an extension of slavery in new territories where the commercial interests wish to introduce it will lead ultimately and inevitably to a re-opening of the slave trade with Africa to procure more slave labor. This, he holds, must not be.

A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of

MEN OF POWER

slavery will arrest the further spread of it and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new, North as well as South.⁴

This unequivocal statement makes even Lincoln's Republican supporters tremble lest it be considered too radical by the voters. His young law partner Herndon questions whether it is entirely prudent. Lincoln replies, "I would rather be defeated with this expression in my speech than be victorious without it."

At the climax of these debates Lincoln presses his opponent relentlessly into a position where, to win the nomination for the Senate, Douglas declares himself in such a fashion that, though he wins the approval of the conservative voters of Illinois, he loses the support of the Southerners in the campaign for the presidency in 1860. This master stroke of political strategy costs Lincoln the senatorial nomination, but it opens the way for a national victory for the anti-slavery forces, led by the Republican Party. The political leaders grasp this; and one of them writes Lincoln asking if he will be a candidate for president, representing the party he has thus put in such a favorable

⁴ The actual words here quoted are from Lincoln's speech accepting the Republican nomination for the Senate in the autumn of 1858, but the substance of them he used in his debates with Douglas.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

situation. His reply is brief: "Seriously, I do not think I am fit for the presidency."

At Fifty-one. But many thoughtful people are not so sure that he is unfit for the presidency. He thinks deeply; he expresses himself clearly and persuasively; and there is something about his rugged honesty that makes all kinds and conditions of men trust him. Best of all he has *convictions* about the most important issues of the day—convictions based on long study of the purposes of the founders of the Union and of the history of the country's progress during the past century.

It is not surprising, therefore, that we find him on the evening of February 27, 1860, facing an audience of 1,500 at Cooper Union, New York, under the auspices of the Young Republican Club of that city. In that audience are Horace Greeley, William Cullen Bryant, David Dudley Field, and most of the other noted literary and political leaders of the day. The fame of this rawboned, lanky westerner has preceded him. They are here to see whether he is only an interesting curiosity of the prairies or a truly national figure of importance. As he stands before them he is hardly prepossessing. His new store clothes, wrinkled from their journey in his valise, hang awkwardly from his gaunt frame; his face is dark and furrowed; his deep-set eyes are sad and anxious. Nothing about him gives any indication of the power of mind and spirit that has been germinating in his long, dark years of poverty

MEN OF POWER

and struggle. Noah Brooks, a reporter for the *New York Tribune*, looking up at him mutters to himself, "Old fellow, you won't do; you may go very well in the wild West, but never in New York."

And now he begins. The crowd sits hushed and intent upon his words. Soon his awkwardness and self-consciousness leave him. His eyes kindle, his face glows, his voice rings, his whole figure is transformed. One by one he discusses the liveliest and most controversial issues which are troubling the minds behind that great sea of upturned faces before him: slavery, secession, money power, the rights of men and of property, the destiny of America. He speaks quietly and earnestly, with occasional flashes of humor, and always straight to the point. His sentences are unadorned, severely plain, with none of the flowery rhetoric so common among orators of the fifties and sixties. For an hour and a half he holds the audience in the hollow of his hand, concluding with the sentence that every school-boy is soon to learn by heart: "Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us dare to do our duty as we understand it." And now the great hall rings with the cheers and shouts of the crowd, convinced that this is their leader as well as the West's.

Noah Brooks, the reporter who at the beginning had his doubts, turns to his fellow newspaper men and blurts, "He's the greatest man since St. Paul!" and hurries away to write, "No man ever before made such

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

an impression on his first appeal to a New York audience."

Lincoln starts to walk back to his hotel after the meeting, but his new shoes hurt him, and he takes a street car.

Next morning he has a caller—Mr. Corning, of the New York Central, who has been much impressed by the speech. "Mr. Lincoln," he begins, "I understand that in Illinois you win all your lawsuits." Lincoln laughs softly, "Oh, no, Mr. Corning, that is not true, but I do make it a rule to refuse unless I am convinced my client's cause is just." Mr. Corning comes abruptly to the point: "Would you accept an offer from the New York Central to become its general counsel at a salary of \$10,000 a year?" Lincoln lapses into a deep study. "Why, Mr. Corning," he replies at last, "what would I do with \$10,000 a year? It would ruin my family to have that much income. I don't believe I had better consider it." His friends urge him not to turn down this opportunity to earn so handsome a salary, but he sticks by his decision. The question is inevitable: How different would the history of the country have been had Lincoln accepted? Who knows?

The presidential election takes place on November 6 of the same year. Four candidates compete: Lincoln for the Republicans, Douglas for the Democrats, Breckenridge for the slave-owners, and Bell for the Whigs. The popular vote gives Lincoln a majority of some 600,000 over Douglas, his nearest rival. In his

MEN OF POWER

Springfield headquarters Lincoln, surrounded by his political friends, receives the election returns. When his victory is sure, he excuses himself saying, "I want to tell a little woman down the street the news." Mary Todd's intuition and faith have been justified at last. Her husband is president of the United States.

At Fifty-two. It is February 11, 1861. Lincoln, as president-elect, is standing on the rear platform of the train that is to carry him from Springfield, never to return. A great throng of his friends has gathered in a cold drizzle to bid him farewell. There is no gaiety about this occasion, no air of celebration. He knows the gravity of the hour. The leaden skies above are bright compared with the black clouds of war that hang heavy and threatening upon the national horizon. Ever since his election, leaders among the southern states have been perfecting their plans for secession from the Union and for a confederacy of slave states. Southern sympathizers in President Buchanan's cabinet have permitted the southern military leaders to transfer huge quantities of arms and ammunition from the northern states to the southern leaving the former almost stripped of military supplies.

He knows, too, that he is ill prepared in practical experience for the momentous task he is about to undertake. He has never held any administrative position of importance. He has won the election almost solely upon his reputation as a public speaker, party leader, and an honest man. Can he measure up

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

to this new and gigantic responsibility? Can he avert a fratricidal war? Can he preserve the Union? Such are the questions that weigh upon his mind. Someone calls for a speech. He draws himself to his full height, takes off his hat, and stands for some moments in profound silence. His lips quiver, and a tear trickles down his wrinkled cheek. At last he speaks in a voice of melancholy eloquence.

My friends, no one not in my situation can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived for a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether I may ever return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

Slowly the train pulls out of the station—out of familiar, friendly scenes—and almost immediately into new dangers. For certain hotheads have sworn that Lincoln shall not reach Washington alive. They have plotted to assassinate him and members of his cabinet as the train passes through Baltimore. To avoid this

MEN OF POWER

danger Lincoln and his party leave the train secretly at Harrisburg, take another one to Philadelphia, and still another to Washington. As a further precaution telegraph wires are cut so that, if this change in routing is discovered, intelligence concerning it may not be communicated to the plotters. By this strategy the party finally reaches Washington safely.

At Fifty-two to Fifty-three. It is March 4, 1861. Lincoln is delivering his inaugural address, striving to avert war at the eleventh hour by moderation and generosity. There need be no bloodshed or violence, he pleads, "and there shall be none, unless it be forced upon the national authority. The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere." Addressing himself to the burning issue of slavery he urges that it be submitted to the arbitrament of the peaceful discussions and decisions of the democratic process.

One section of our country believes slavery is right, and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong, and ought not to be extended; and this is the only substantial dispute. . . . Why should there be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present differences is either party without faith of

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

being in the right? If the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with his eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people.

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you.

You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government; while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend" it.

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection.

The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

But the better angels are outnumbered and their gentle voices drowned less than six weeks later by the roar of the guns bombarding Fort Sumter. The war is on. Each side at the beginning expects that it will be over in a few weeks. No one dreams that it can continue through four long and bloody years. We shall not follow here that tragic history; our concern is with Lincoln the man and his own inner struggle to make himself a leader, worthy of the trust of the nation.

Any picture of him during his first year in the presidency which portrays him as a man sure of himself, or

MEN OF POWER

as a strong ruler of an admiring populace united in supporting him, is false. Nathaniel Wright Stephenson gives a more faithful account.

There is a period of sixteen months—from February, 1861, to a day in June, 1862—when Lincoln is the most singular, the most problematic of statesmen. Out of this period he issues with apparent abruptness, the final Lincoln, with a place among the few consummate masters of statecraft. During the sixteen months, his genius comes and goes. His confidence, whether in himself or in others, is an uncertain quantity. At times he is bold, even rash; at others, irresolute. The constant factor in his mood all this while is his amazing humility. He seems to have forgotten his own existence. As a person with likes and dislikes, with personal hopes and fears, he has vanished. He is but an afflicted and perplexed mind, struggling desperately to save his country. A selfless man he may be truly called through months of torment which made him over from a theoretical to a practical statesman. He entered this period a literary man who had been elevated almost by accident to the position of a leader in politics. After many blunders, after doubt, hesitation and pain, he came forth from this stern ordeal a powerful man of action.⁶

For his cabinet he has deliberately appointed men of widely varying points of view, including his own Republican rivals for the Presidency: Seward (conservative) as secretary of state; Chase (radical) as secretary

⁶ *Lincoln, An Account of His Personal Life*, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1924, p. 127. Copyright, 1922-1924. Used by special permission of the publishers.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

of the treasury ; Bates as attorney-general ; and Cameron as secretary of war. But Cameron's incapacity for his post in this critical time soon becomes so manifest that Lincoln replaces him with Edwin M. Stanton, a lawyer noted not only for his executive ability and his loyalty to the Democratic Party, but for his fiery temper, and his peppery speech. Many advisers warn Lincoln against this man's thorny disposition, but Lincoln thinks his ability offsets his temperament. Welding these, and the other strong men of his cabinet, into a working unit calls for all the tact and humility he has developed through his difficult prairie years. They never become harmonious ; quarrels over policies are frequent and bitter, but Lincoln's patience and his power to dissolve bitterness with a dose of homely wit keep them together.

One incident, typical of scores, illustrates his method. A certain congressman, Mr. Lovejoy, chairman of a committee of western men, one day persuades Lincoln to sign a document ordering the exchange of certain eastern and western soldiers for more effective work during the war. Lovejoy takes this document to Stanton, who promptly explodes.

"Did Lincoln give you that order?" he demands.

"He did, sir," replies Lovejoy.

"Then he is a damned fool!" blurts Stanton.

"Do you mean to say that the President is a damned fool?" exclaims Lovejoy in amazement.

"Yes, sir, if he gave you such an order as that," retorts Stanton.

MEN OF POWER

Lovejoy betakes himself to the President and relates the interview, omitting nothing.

"Did Stanton say I was a damned fool?" queries Lincoln.

"He did, sir, and repeated it."

Lincoln is thoughtful for a moment. "If Stanton said I was a damned fool, then I must be one, for he is nearly always right, and he generally says what he means. I will step over and see him."

What can Stanton or any other cantankerous cabinet member do in the face of such good-humored humility in his chief? A soft answer turneth away wrath—yes, and in Stanton's case transforms it into co-operation.

At Fifty-three. In the White House, the evening of September 7, 1862. The Federal armies have sustained a series of disastrous defeats which have bred discontent in the northern states. Men are beginning to ask whether the preservation of the Union is worth all this sacrifice of blood and wealth. Why not give up the Union and allow the Confederate States to form a country of their own? In Ohio the Democratic Party at its state convention in June of this year has chosen a pro-slavery man (Vallandigham) as its candidate for governor. The following month riots have broken out in New York City against the Conscription Act. The metropolis has been ruled by mob law for five days; negroes have been beaten to death; and an orphan asylum for colored children has been sacked

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

and burned. Cartoonists have begun to picture Lincoln as a dunce, a gorilla, a mad dog.

Lincoln thus faces military failure at the front and disaffection at home. His cause is threatened, too, with the prospect that the southern states may succeed in making a military alliance with some European nation. Against this dark background we find him pacing the floor, perplexed and afflicted beyond the power of human help. He does not see how God can permit this sort of thing. Struggling with the age-old problem of evil he goes to his own room, locks the door, takes a piece of paper from his desk, and tries to put in writing his double sense of responsibility to human duty and to divine power. Here is the result:

The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for an against the same thing at the same time. In the present Civil War it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party; and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are the best adaptation to effect his purpose.

At Fifty-four. Washington, May, 4, 1863. For three days Lincoln and his whole cabinet have been suffering agonies of distress and anxiety waiting for news of the important battle that is being fought at Chancellorsville. Lincoln has walked back and forth from the White House to the telegraph office, but always without news. What could have happened to

MEN OF POWER

Grant and his army of 122,000 men? In that battle he has been facing Lee and the combined armies of the Confederacy. The issue of the whole Civil War is at stake—and still no news.

Now word comes that a nineteen-year-old reporter, Henry Wing, of the *New York Tribune*, has broken through the Confederate lines and been captured in a town nearby. The boy has acted strangely, has tried to get the use of a telegraph; but the northern army officers have refused him. He has wanted to send news to the *New York Tribune* and give his paper a scoop. But the army officers have refused to allow him the use of a telegraph unless he first tells them what message he wishes to send. He has declined to do so. Thereupon Stanton has ordered the boy to be held as a spy and to be shot on the following morning.

When Lincoln hears of this, he sends word to the boy asking if he will speak with the President. The boy replies that he will talk with the President if the President will first allow him to send one hundred words to the *New York Tribune*. Lincoln says "Yes," and sends a special train to bring the boy to Washington. The boy tells his story to the President and the cabinet. It is not a very satisfactory story, for he has left Chancellorsville before the battle was over. One by one the cabinet members rise and depart. Finally only the President and Henry Wing are left in the room.

"You wanted to speak to me?" says Mr. Lincoln.

"Yes, Mr. President. I have a message for you—

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

a message from General Grant. He told me I was to give it to you when you were alone."

Immediately Lincoln is intent. "Something from Grant to me?"

"Yes," says Henry Wing. "He told me I was to tell you, Mr. President, that there would be no turning back."

That is the word Lincoln has been waiting for, not only for three days but for three years. It is the word that ends his growing despair. He rises, sweeps his long arm around the boy, embraces him, and puts a kiss upon his forehead. "Come and tell me about it," he says. And Henry Wing sits down with the President and tells him the whole story of Grant at Chancellorsville.

November 19 of the same year (1863) at Gettysburg. The tide has begun to turn in favor of the northern armies under Grant's generalship. Four months earlier one of the fiercest and most decisive battles has been fought here and five thousand soldiers left dead upon the field. Today twenty thousand men and women—fathers, mothers, sweethearts, and friends of the fallen—have assembled to dedicate a cemetery to these who have been buried where they fell. Edward Everett, the great orator, has finished a two-hour address, holding the attention of the sorrowful concourse as few men could have done. But now the audience is weary. It is two o'clock in the afternoon, and most of them have

MEN OF POWER

been standing since ten in the morning. A wave of restlessness passes over the crowd.

Lincoln is presented. As the tall, black figure rises and comes to the front of the platform there is subdued applause, and then a moment of quiet.

Fourscore and seven years ago [he begins] our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The speech ends in less than four minutes. The twenty thousand stand hushed and awed in a perfect tribute of silence. They do not need to wait for the judgment of history to know that they have heard an immortal address.

At Fifty-six. March 4, 1865, at Washington. The war is drawing to its close. Throughout his tortured administration Lincoln has held steadily to two objectives: union and emancipation. Both are nearly won. The slaves have been emancipated, the union all but restored. But this does not mean that the people are as clear in head, unselfish in heart, or generous in spirit as their President. Passions aroused by war do not subside at the prospect of peace; they turn rather to covetousness, greed, and lust for spoils. Lincoln's efforts to bring peace and to reconstruct the war-torn country have come into collision with at least three large groups of fanatics: the extreme Abolitionists, who want social equality for negroes at once; the machine politicians, who want to capitalize on victory and extend their power over the new governments to be set up in the southern states; and the money-grabbers, who want to bleed the prostrate South of every ounce of wealth the war has not already taken from it. Against these and a score of other groups with mixed but largely selfish motives Lincoln must now battle. They have defeated him in more than one engagement, but the majority of the people have supported him and re-elected him to the presidency.

MEN OF POWER

Today he is taking again the oath of office and making his second inaugural the occasion to appeal to those better angels in human nature which must be allowed their rule if hatred and malice are to be vanquished and peace restored.

Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

"Now He Belongs to the Ages." Five weeks after the second inaugural Lincoln's body lies in a coffin at the White House. It has been almost inevitable that he should come to a violent end. If John Wilkes Booth had not fired the fatal shot, probably some other fanatic would have done so. For passions have run high. Many who lost sons and property in the war have held Lincoln personally responsible. Their ignorant prejudice has been fanned into flames of hatred by news-

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

papers opposed to his moderate policies. Hundreds of cartoons have caricatured him as a poor, befuddled, narrow-minded backwoodsman. Others have pictured him as a monomaniac clinging viciously to his one idea. It is not surprising, therefore, that the highly emotional Booth, stirred by such newspaper propaganda, should feel that he is doing a public service by assassinating this dangerous character.

But our last scene is not concerned with the assassination. It is rather with the effect of his death upon one of the newspaper cartoonists who has been sharpest in his attacks upon Lincoln. That man is John Tenniel, cartoonist of London's *Punch*. Tenniel with his caustic pencil and bitter pen has ridiculed Lincoln's ancestry, his provincialism, his personal appearance, almost his every act as president. His cartoons have been copied by the opposition press throughout America. Lincoln has kept steadily on in spite of these attacks. And now on the day of his funeral the readers of *Punch* are surprised to find in the place of the usual cartoon something different. It is a drawing showing Lincoln's coffin draped with the American flag, with mourners at the head and feet. Beneath the drawing, and written by this same Tenniel, they read these lines:

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier!

You, who with mocking pencil went to trace,
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face,

MEN OF POWER

His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt bristling hair,
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please!

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,
Judging each step, as though the way were plain,
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph
Of chief's perplexity, or people's pain!

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet
The stars and stripes he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scurrill jester, is there room for *you*?

Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer—
To lame my pencil, and confute my pen—
To make me own this hind, of princes peer,
This rail-splitter, a true-born king of men.



LEO TOLSTOY

1828-1910

THE STORY of Tolstoy's life is the story of an intense struggle between two natures—a lower and a higher. Out of it he achieved a power probably unsurpassed by any man of the nineteenth century. As novelist, dramatist, social reformer, educator, practical philosopher, and seeker after the truth, he made such profoundly significant contributions that no student in any of these fields can reckon without him. Even before his death his works had been translated into nearly every language of the civilized world and were being read, not only by the literati, but by farmers, mechanics, factory workers, and boys and girls of school age. The motion picture made from his novel *Anna Karenina* has been exhibited to millions in America, Europe, and the Orient. The political, social, and re-

MEN OF POWER

ligious leaders of the twentieth century from Lenin to Gandhi, from Romain Rolland to Kagawa, from Bernard Shaw to E. Stanley Jones, have all acknowledged the power of Tolstoy upon their thought and action.

Back of this power, and permeating it, moved incessantly the struggle between his two natures. He found that struggle in himself, in Russia, in human beings he met in every walk of life. At first he was content to portray it in his novels and stories. But portrayal did not satisfy him. He must commit himself, must plunge into the thick of it, or be crushed. Try as he might, he could not escape it; so he eventually settled down to fight it out within himself, within his own family, within his countrymen. He had no peace until he thought he had found the way to victory; and when he had it, he proclaimed it to the world with a forcefulness seldom equaled since the days of St. Paul. Because that struggle is universal, men and women everywhere see something of themselves in Tolstoy and read him for the light he sheds on their own inner lives.

His Nation and Times. "To the stables with him!" was a common command in Russia of the latter half of the nineteenth century. It meant that some serf would be taken to the stables and whipped. The whole country was divided into but two classes, landowners and serfs. The landowners made up about ten per cent of the population, but had all the wealth and the privileges.

LEO TOLSTOY

The serfs constituted nearly ninety per cent of the population and had no wealth and few privileges beyond the right to work the landlords' estates and cultivate a few acres for themselves. Unquestioning obedience was their lot—enforced at the whipping post in the stables. Cities were few, and displayed the same extremes of luxury and privilege against poverty and degradation. Although most of the poor of the cities were freemen, they had to work long hours at miserable wages.

This economic division had its social parallel. The serfs, with no schools, grew up ignorant, superstitious, fearful, and without hope of improving their lot in this world. Little higher than beasts of burden, they could be sold or traded as part of the land on which they labored, or their services rented out to any neighboring landlord in need of help. They did all the heavy work of raising food for Russia and fighting her wars, but they enjoyed few of the fruits. On the other hand, the landowners looked upon wealth, prestige, education, culture, and leisure as their natural birthright. Their great estates passed from one generation to the next by inheritance or changed hands in payment of gambling debts. Only one kind of work was counted respectable among this landed gentry: service under the government, either in some civil capacity or, preferably, as an army officer. Any man of fair talent not too allergic to labor could become prosperous in such government service.

MEN OF POWER

An aristocracy of considerable culture had developed among these landowners. They patterned it largely on Western European models, chiefly French and German, employed foreign tutors for their children, and in general led carefree lives of genial hospitality. Each year they spent their summer and autumn months on their estates, supervising the labors of their serfs or following the hounds to the hunt. The more prosperous spent their winters in magnificent homes in St. Petersburg or Moscow, where a gay round of dinners, parties, and theaters capped the year with merriment. They spoke French to each other and used the Russian language only to their serfs.

The great passion of many of the aristocracy was to have Russia become like Western Europe. They had discovered that the genteel classes of France and England considered the Russian nobility crude and uncouth, not much above the peasants they suppressed. The chief movements in literature and philosophy in Russia of the nineteenth century directed themselves either toward the task of converting Russia to French or English models of culture on the one hand, or to a more thorough-going Slavic pattern on the other. Peter the Great early in the eighteenth century had started the Western trend by his travels in Europe, from which he had brought back experts to teach the Russian aristocrats the things he thought they needed to know. By the nineteenth century the movement toward westernizing Russia had captured the majority

LEO TOLSTOY

of the upper class, including the liberals, and had widened the gulf between the landowners and their serfs. The latter remained Russian to the core—Slavic, with a touch of the Tartar, and imbued with the elemental strength and animal courage of the original conquerors of the land. The former strained every effort to escape from being Russian.

The established church—the Russian Orthodox—had bound itself and its fortunes with the landowners. It approved serfdom and used its immense prestige as custodian of the keys of heaven and hell to keep the serfs in subjection. To be sure, it performed its historic function of worship and developed music and liturgies of great beauty. It also urged kindness upon landlords; but it seldom questioned the system that kept the masses in ignorance and deprived of every human right except the right to labor. During Tolstoy's time it became allied not only with the landowners, but with the police and gave its sanction to oppression and persecution. Little wonder that the educated among the aristocracy, while they profited by the church's protection of their privileges, had little respect for its teaching. In matters of religion and philosophy outside the church skepticism reigned. But not rebellion. State and church combined to maintain the *status quo*. Freedom of speech and assemblage was denied everywhere. Students by the hundreds were expelled from the few universities, or even sent into exile, for attending unsanctioned meetings. Popu-

MEN OF POWER

lar professors who ventured to question the rightness of the social order soon found themselves outside it. The one formula for safety was simple: believe, obey, and keep silent.

Such was the world in which Leo Tolstoy lived. It is the world portrayed in his novels and short stories. They preserve for all time the panorama of this Russia from the years between Napoleon's retreat from Moscow to the beginning of the industrial revolution toward the close of the nineteenth century. His Russia, like his own spirit, had two natures, a higher and a lower. But he was to discover in time that the higher and lower natures of Russia were not co-extensive with the artificial divisions of her society based on land ownership.

His Ancestors. He belonged by birth unmistakably among the upper tenth. The Tolstoy ancestral home had forty-two rooms, stately columns, rich tapestries, life-sized portraits of his forebears, a very much alive grandmother with a white lace bonnet and a gold snuff-box, and a full complement of aristocratic aunts and uncles and cousins—all subsisting pleasurably on the labors of a few hundred serfs. On the great estate surrounding the house, flower gardens and seven lakes adorned the landscape. On his father's side he could trace his lineage from Peter Tolstoy, a favorite of Peter the Great, who, "in reward for services more brilliant than honorable, conferred upon him the title of count." After the custom of Russia the title had

LEO TOLSTOY

descended upon all male members in direct line. Among them had been many army officers, diplomats, governors, and minor dignitaries. Most of them, however, had been unsympathetic with the extreme autocracy of the government and shared the more humanitarian attitude of Alexander I. Some had suffered exile for their more liberal views. The more recent members of the Tolstoy line had been content to be easy-living country squires.

By the time the estate reached Nicholas Tolstoy, future father of Leo, it had become so encumbered with debt that the only solution for the family was for Nicholas to marry for money. This after some hesitation he did, taking for his bride Princess Marya Volkonsky, a thirty-two-year-old woman whose singularly unattractive features had seemed to foreordain her to spinisterhood. She was, however, a woman of intelligence and character as well as wealth, and the marriage turned out quite happily. As her dowry she brought eight hundred serfs and the estates of Yasnaya Polyana, where Leo was later born. She brought also a heritage of noble ancestry that far surpassed that of the Tolstoy, important as they were. For she was descended directly from Rurik, founder of the Russian empire; and her forbears through generations had maintained an enviable reputation for intellectual and social brilliance. They, too, had been fairly liberal and passively opposed to the autocratic oppressions of the czars. Thus Tolstoy came of the bluest blood of old Russia.

MEN OF POWER

His social station was among the highest; and the pride he felt in this aristocratic background shines through his writings even when, in his later years, he accepts and preaches the doctrines of humility and the abolition of class distinction. He never pretended to be a prophet of the soil, a log-cabin leader of the people. Like Milton, he had a conscious sense of his superiority. In his case it was the inheritance of a family which had the tradition of governing. He was a thoroughbred, and he knew it.

His Early Home. Strong family love pervaded the home of Leo's childhood. It was a huge household in the great mansion of the Yasnaya Polyana estate to which the Tolstoys had moved upon the marriage of Nicholas to Princess Marya Volkonsky. Marya bore three sons (Leo was the third) and a daughter before her untimely death at the age of thirty-eight. A wise and kindly woman, she had unusual talent as a pianist and a lively imagination out of which she invented charming stories for her children. Leo was hardly two when she died and remembered nothing of her; but the servants mourned her as a saint, for she had treated them with every consideration and had never spoken a harsh word to anyone.

Her place as mother of the children was taken by a distant cousin — good-looking, plump, genial Mlle. Yergolsky, whom they all called "Aunt Tatanya." Leo developed a deep affection for her and she for him. He said in later years that she had the greatest influence

LEO TOLSTOY

upon his life. "From early childhood she taught me the spiritual delight of love. She taught me this joy not by words; but by her whole being she filled me with love. I saw, I felt, how she enjoyed loving, and I understood the joy of love. Secondly, she taught me the delights of an unhurried, quiet life."

His father, a liberal and a disciple of Voltaire, was a handsome man with a pleasant face and the graces of a born aristocrat. He ruled the estate with a gentle hand, and far from being cruel to his serfs was often weak in discipline. Young Leo never heard of any serf being whipped by his father's order. His earliest recollection was of his father sitting with his grandmother on the sofa helping her to play patience. "My father was polite and tender with everyone, but to my grandmother he was always particularly tender and submissive. . . . My aunts sit in armchairs, and one of them reads aloud. We children come in to say goodnight. . . . We always take leave of Grandma and our aunts by kissing their hands." Daytimes the boys of the family spent mostly out of doors in vigorous games or in hunting with their father and his numerous guests.

As a child Leo had an almost precocious intensity of emotion. He felt joy and sorrow keenly and wept so often (and more from joy than sorrow) that his brothers nicknamed him "Weeping Leo." Of these brothers, the oldest, Nicholas, influenced him most. It was Nicholas who taught him a game he never for-

MEN OF POWER

got. They called it the "ant brothers game." He described it thus:

It consisted in our sitting down under chairs, sheltering ourselves with boxes, screening ourselves with handkerchiefs, and, thus crouching in the dark, pressing ourselves against each other. I remember experiencing a special feeling of love and pathos and liking this game very much. The ant brotherhood was revealed to us, but the chief secret as to the way for all men to cease suffering any misfortune, to leave off quarreling and being angry, and to become continuously happy—this secret, as he told us, was written by him on a green stick, which stick he had buried by the road on the edge of a certain ravine, at which spot, since my corpse must be buried somewhere, I have asked to be buried in memory of Nicolenska.

I have especially kept a strong impression of the 'Ant Brotherhood' and the mysterious green stick connected with it destined to make all men happy.

The ideals of ant brothers lovingly cleaving to each other, though not beneath two arm-chairs curtained with handkerchiefs, but of all mankind under the wide dome of the sky, has remained the same for me. As then I believed that there existed a little green stick whereon was written that which could destroy all the evil in men and give them great welfare, so do I now also believe that such truth exists, and that it will be revealed to men and will give them all that it promises.¹

Leo enjoyed these boyhood years; and others enjoyed

¹ From an unpublished manuscript, quoted by Aylmer Maude, *The Life of Tolstoy*, Oxford University Press, London, 1908, I, 18-19.

LEO TOLSTOY

him, partly because of his vivacious and affectionate disposition, and partly because they never knew what he would do next.

He seems to have been a born experimenter with the true spirit of the investigator—"if you want to find out, try it." He wondered how he would look if he shaved off his eyebrows—particularly if it would improve his appearance, which grieved him greatly, for he thought himself ugly. He promptly shaved off his eyebrows and wept bitterly at the result. Another time he conceived a desire to fly; he thought he had only to sit down on his heels and clasp his arms around his knees to overcome gravitation. The tighter he clasped them the higher he would fly. When the rest of the family were at dinner, Leo went upstairs, climbed out a second-story window, and leaped, holding his knees with all his might. His absence from the table was noted with disapproving frown from the grandmother. His tutor apologized for his errant pupil. Then a servant whispered something in his ear. He jumped up and dashed out, something unheard of at a Tolstoy dinner. Leo was found lying bleeding in the courtyard. A doctor was summoned, but he could not bring the lad to consciousness. His stupor passed into a deep sleep lasting for eighteen hours, after which he arose as well as ever, but badly bruised.

His elder brothers were sent to riding school because noblemen had to know how to ride. At home they had an old horse called Raven. One day Leo begged

MEN OF POWER

for a ride, but his brothers refused to allow him until they first had their fill. Finally Leo mounted the horse and beat him to make him run. But the horse would not run even though Leo broke his switch across his sides. Leo demanded a stouter switch from the attendant serf.

‘Ah, master, you have no pity! Why do you beat him? He is twenty years old and is tired out; he can hardly breathe. Why, for a horse, he is as old as Timofeich [a very old peasant living at the place]. You might as well get on Timofeich’s back and drive him beyond his strength like that with a switch. Would you feel no pity for him?’

I thought of Timofeich and listened to the man. I got off the horse’s back; and when I noticed how its steaming sides were working and how heavily it breathed through its nostrils, swishing its thin tail, I understood how hard it was for it. Till then I had thought that it was as happy as I was myself. And I felt so sorry for Raven that I began to kiss his sweaty neck and to beg his pardon for having beaten him.

Since then I have grown up, but I always have pity on horses and always remember Raven and Timofeich when I see horses ill-treated.²

In these early years at Yasnaya Polyana, Leo and his brothers had an old German tutor whom they loved. He had worn the same gown for ten years and read the same book—a history of the Seven Years’ War—and both remained clean. But when Leo reached his eighth

² Maude, *op. cit.*, I, 28-29.

LEO TOLSTOY

year the family moved to Moscow for better educational advantages for the older children, dismissed the old German, and employed for the younger ones a youthful French tutor named St. Thomas. The change was important in Leo's life, for he felt keenly the injustice to his old teacher and decided to greet the new one with disobedience. St. Thomas thereupon tried to break the boy's spirit. Violent scenes ensued, until one day matters reached a crisis when the new tutor with a switch endeavored to force Leo to his knees in submission. The lad kicked, screamed, and bit, and went into something like a spasm. For months afterward Leo suffered from nightmares. So St. Thomas resolved upon a change in tactics. He tried friendliness, even flattery. "It is a shame for a boy of *your* mind not to understand this or that," he would say, and compare his pupil's potentialities to those of young Molière. This system proved successful, and the boy became pliant and happy again. But no tutor could ever compel Leo to study. Of all the subjects, only one appealed to his intense nature—poetry. For hours he pored over Russian legends in verse, especially those by the great Pushkin, which he committed to memory. The only other literature he liked in these years was the story of Joseph in the Bible and *The Arabian Nights*. A subordinate tutor's judgment upon the three sons, so far as their ability to acquire knowledge was concerned, was that "Sergey wishes and can, Dmitri wishes and can't, and Leo neither wishes nor can."

MEN OF POWER

Tragedy first came into his life with the sudden death of his father when Leo was nine. Less than a year later his grandmother also passed away, and the boy suffered intensely. For months he insisted that his father had only gone on a long journey and would soon be coming again down the street in Moscow. These deaths, and those of other aunts and cousins about the same time, brough his happy childhood to an end. The family mansions at Yasnaya Polyana and in Moscow were closed, and he and his brothers went to live with an aunt in the university town of Kazan. Here his beloved Aunt Tatanya could not follow him, and he felt more than ever bereft. His new guardian, light-hearted—except for her jealousies of her philandering husband—spent most of her time in social activities and left Leo and the other children to the care of St. Thomas, who was now their only tutor. For the next few years Leo's education progressed indifferently; he grew in stature, but not much in grace or wisdom. His intense nature brooded on the happy days of a carefree childhood that would not return.

University Years of Storm and Stress. At sixteen his guardian advised him to choose a vocation, and urged the diplomatic service as most suitable for a young man of family and wealth. Accordingly, Leo took the entrance examinations to enter the University of Kazan—and failed. In the same year, according to Russian custom, he was counted as having reached his majority. In his aunt's home he was given a room

LEO TOLSTOY

of his own, an allowance of several hundred rubles a month, a serf to act as man-servant, and in general was expected to run his own life. He repeated the examinations, entered the university, and proceeded to allow life to run him.

Study was undoubtedly the way for common folk to get an education; but Leo Tolstoy was a member of the nobility (his grandfather had once been governor of the province), and was a popular young man in his own right. With his social position went an overweening self-confidence and superiority complex which concealed a very frightened young boy. His personal appearance discouraged him; he could have nothing to do with the common herd in school; he came to class in a carriage accompanied by his servant, stalked into the classroom, and sat on the aristocrats' bench where only French was spoken and fellow members of the nobility suffered together. He hid behind a stony front to protect his sensitive spirit, which, urged by a powerful vanity, desired more than anything else to conquer society, to be talked of and liked. He was popular at all the dances even though he was a poor dancer and likely to retire into a stony silence when he awkwardly upset a chair or tripped over a rug.

The end of the first school year approached with its examinations. Leo took them and failed. He had to repeat the year while his brothers graduated with excellent records. He could not endure to repeat the same courses; so he applied for a transfer to the Faculty of

MEN OF POWER

Law, which the University granted. The next year he entered upon his law studies and became even more a social butterfly than in the previous terms. However, before the end of the year he discovered the joys of studying and by intense application succeeded in passing to the second year. He did not finish the year, but near the end applied for a dismissal without degree. His formal schooling at the University of Kazan thus came to an end.

Yet he was neither lazy nor dull nor ignorant. He had a capacity for independent research when his interest was aroused and wrote an essay comparing the *Esprit des lois* of Montesquieu and the *Instruction* of Catherine II. During this period of apparently aimless participation in all the frivolities of his social group he came to some conclusions about himself. He did want to do things which would be important and successful, but he had failed. A diary entry for March, 1837, just before he left the university, gives his reasons for his failure:

I have greatly changed, but still have not attained that degree of perfection (in my occupations) which I would like to attain. I do not fulfil that which I set myself to do, and what I do fulfil I do not fulfil well. I do not exercise my memory. For this purpose I here put down some rules which, as it seems to me, would greatly help if I followed them.

- (1) To fulfil despite everything that which I set myself.
- (2) To fulfil well what I do fulfil.

LEO TOLSTOY

- (3) Never to refer to a book for what I have forgotten but to endeavor to recall it to mind myself.
- (4) Continually to compel my mind to work with the utmost power it is capable of.
- (5) To read and think always aloud.
- (6) Not to be ashamed of telling those who interrupt me that they hinder me. . . .

The Struggle between His Two Natures Grows Hot. He also did some serious thinking about what he intended to do when he left the university. He would return to Yasnaya Polyana, which, as was the custom in Russia, had passed to him, the youngest son, when the estate was finally divided among the children. But his return was not for the purpose of simply escaping a bad university career and responsibility. A diary entry a few weeks later gives his concept of the purpose of life and what he intends to do:

The object of life is the conscious aspiration toward the many-sided development of all that exists.

The object of life in the country during two years:

- (1) To study the whole course of law necessary for the final university examination.
- (2) To study practical medicine and a part of the theory.
- (3) To study these languages: French, Russian, German, English, Italian, and Latin.
- (4) To study agriculture, both theoretically and practically.
- (5) To study history, geography, and statistics.
- (6) To study mathematics, gymnasium course.
- (7) To write my university essay [thesis].
- (8) To attain the highest possible perfection in music and painting.
- (9) To write down the rules of conduct.
- (10) To acquire some knowledge of the

MEN OF POWER

natural sciences. And (11) to compose essays on all the subjects I shall study.

Leo passed through the kind of late adolescent religious crisis which is the fate of many youths, but he was aware of the process and what it was doing to him. People of the lower classes were required to go to church and take Holy Communion, but his class could do as they pleased. Religion for Leo became even less than the empty formality it meant to his fellow aristocrats.

The belief instilled from childhood in me, as in so many others, gradually disappeared, but with this difference: that as from fifteen years of age I had begun to read philosophical works, I became very early conscious of my own disbelief. From the age of sixteen I ceased to pray, and ceased, from conviction, to attend the services of the church and to fast. I no longer accepted the faith of my childhood, but I believed in something though I could not exactly explain in what. I believed in a God—or rather, I did not deny the existence of a God—but what kind of God I could not have told; I denied neither Christ nor his teaching, but in what that teaching consisted I could not have said.

Now, when I think over that time, I see clearly that all the faith I had, the only belief which, apart from mere animal instinct, swayed my life, was a belief in the possibility of perfection, though what it was in itself, or what would be its results, I could not have said.

I tried to reach intellectual perfection; my studies

LEO TOLSTOY

were extended in every direction of which my life afforded me a chance; I strove to strengthen my will, forming for myself rules which I forced myself to follow; I did my best to develop my physical powers by every physical exercise calculated to give strength and agility, and by way of accustoming myself to patient endurance, I subjected myself to many voluntary hardships and trials of privation. All this I looked on as necessary to obtain the perfection at which I aimed.

At first, of course, moral perfection seemed to me the main end. But I soon found myself contemplating in its stead an ideal of general perfectibility; in other words, I wished to be better, not in my own eyes nor in God's but in the sight of other men. And very soon this striving to be better-in-the-sight-of-men feeling again changed into another—the desire to have more power than others, to secure for myself a greater share of fame, of social distinction, and of wealth.³

He returned to Yasnaya Polyana as the young master of a great estate. His beloved Aunt Tatanya Yergolsky came again to live with him and run his house. His higher nature in the ascendent, he devoted himself to the welfare of his peasants, whom he found desperately poor. He also plunged into his studies with the energetic abandon which had marked his previous social life. His aspirations blazed—and in a few months burned out in the ashes of failure. For the serfs were so intractable, their traditional ways of doing things so strong, and his inexperience so great, that he failed

³ *My Confession.*

MEN OF POWER

completely to change their situation. They considered him simply an ardent young fool and did not understand his sincere desire to better their condition. He felt it to be his responsibility as their owner to ease their poverty, improve their houses, abolish punishment on the farm; but they would not co-operate. After two summers in this effort he confessed his failure, gave his higher nature an indefinite holiday, returned to Moscow, and there drifted aimlessly or followed the beck and call of his lower nature.

Early in 1849, now almost twenty-one, he applied for admission to the University of St. Petersburg. He wrote back to his brother Sergey that he had decided to stay there forever; he had reformed himself, and now he would be a new person. But in a few weeks he wrote again to Sergey:

I think you are already saying I am a most frivolous fellow. And saying the truth. God knows what I have been up to! I went to St. Petersburg without any reason; there I have done nothing necessary, only spent a heap of money and run up debts. Stupid! Insufferably stupid! You can't believe how it torments me. Above all, the *debts*, which I *must* pay and as *quickly as possible*, because if I do not soon pay them, I shall, besides the money, lose my reputation too. Before I get my next year's income I absolutely require 3,500: 1,200 for the Guardians' Council, 1,600 to pay my debts, 700 for my current expenses. I know you will exclaim—but what is to be done? Such stupidity is accomplished once in a lifetime. I had to do penance for my freedom (there was no one to thrash me, and

LEO TOLSTOY

this was my chief misfortune) and for philosophy, and so I have paid premium. Be so kind as to arrange to get me out of the false and odious position in which I now am, without a penny at my disposal and in debt all round.

Unfortunately such incredible stupidity could be accomplished more than once in a lifetime, as his later history abundantly proves.

The St. Petersburg phase did not last very long. In a few months he was back at Yasnaya Polyana, where he lived more or less regularly until he went off to the wars in 1851. He alternated between the estate and Moscow, and between rigorous asceticism and complete abandonment to feasts, dancing, card-playing, gypsies, and general dissipation. He revised his schedule, allotting certain time to each of the admirable things he intended to do; but the strain soon became too much again, and off he would go into another violent outbreak.

He was a magnificent animal with strong passions, a strong will, and an equally strong intent to conquer himself. His attempts at self-discipline were not sentimental piety, but the honest endeavors of a sturdy young man to rule himself so that he might accomplish something that would make him a person of note. But his body was a mount which did not easily submit to a bit. The rein would be too taut, desire would grow too strong, and the animal would take the bit in its teeth and run.

MEN OF POWER

More than anything else, his desire for women harassed him all during this period. In general, women were divided into two classes: those who like his mother and his aunts were holy and pure and could not be touched, and those whose attractions could be bought and enjoyed for a time and then cast aside. Young men of his age did not worry about the sexual problem—that is, young men except Leo. His urges were as strong as those of his companions, and he gave way to them as riotously; but he never ceased to think of his desire for women as wrong. The usual solution was that used by his father: form a liaison with an attractive peasant girl—or perhaps one of higher station. Even one of his beloved aunts thought this desirable for Leo. He made such liaisons; but every period of self-indulgence was followed by bitter repentance, remorse, and despair.

During all this period his mind was exceedingly active. He had a voracious appetite for literature, particularly the current French philosophers. He read Voltaire avidly at fourteen; and although not adopting that philosopher's deism, he accepted his criticisms of the church and the established order without a question. Rather strong meat for a youth, but Leo was maturing. Within a year he was reading Rousseau—all twenty volumes of him, even the *Dictionary of Music*. He conceived such a passion for the romantic Frenchman that he wore a coarse brown gown (in an attempt to simplify his life) and a medallion carrying the phi-

LEO TOLSTOY

losopher's picture on a chain around his neck instead of the orthodox cross.

Seeking Escape from Himself. Such was the Tolstoy who was constantly running away from himself—first from his lower nature to escape his passions, and then into dissipations to escape the discipline of his higher nature. By 1851, at the age of twenty-three, his world had become a blur in which he could see nothing clearly. He was in debt more often than out; he could not control his lusts; he had not distinguished himself at the universities; he did not know what he wanted to do. He wanted intensely to make something of his life, but could not determine what. Then Nicholas, his older brother, came home from the wars in the Caucasus and gave such a glowing account of the adventure, the thrill of life there, that Leo saw in it an opportunity to escape from his frustrated years and to start life afresh in a new situation among new people. So he ran away from himself again. He went to the Caucasus and soon enlisted as a cadet, a rank above that of private and available for him because of his family's social position. He lived with the officers and bore himself so bravely in several skirmishes that three times he was cited to receive the St. George's cross for courage in action.

But his military duties occupied but a fraction of his time. The rest he spent in hunting and gambling and generally making merry. He loved the outdoor life. He got on well with the soldiers, finding the compan-

MEN OF POWER

ionship of privates and peasants more congenial than that of his social equals. With the latter he disputed, quarreled, and even dueled; with the former he was friendly and considerate. He did not parade his social position, but threw himself as an equal into their games and sports.

Yet he soon found that he had not escaped his inner struggle; he had brought it with him. Periodically he gambled away his money—all he had and all he could borrow—and then tried to forget it in dissipation. Just as periodically he reformed and set new and impossible high standards for his future conduct. In *My Confessions* he later wrote concerning this period of his life:

I put men to death in war, I fought duels to slay others, I lost at cards, wasted my substance wrung from the sweat of peasants, punished the latter cruelly, rioted with loose women, and deceived men. Lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence, murder. . . . There was not one crime which I did not commit, and yet I was not the less considered by my equals a comparatively moral man.

After three years in the Caucasus he returned home, but was immediately ordered into action in the army of the Danube in the Russo-Turkish war. In this campaign and in the Crimea a little later he saw war at its grisly worst. In the terrible siege of Sevastopol he was so much in the thick of the fray that the smoke of the batteries of the Fourth Bastion temporarily blinded him.

LEO TOLSTOY

He Begins to Write. Meanwhile, he had begun, at the suggestion of his Aunt Tatanya, to occupy his times of military inactivity by attempts to write. His brothers Nicholas and Dmitri were doing so; why shouldn't he? His first efforts were tentative; but by July, 1852, at the age of twenty-four, he had written much of his first novel, partly autobiographical. He called it *Childhood*, signed it only with his initials, L. N., and sent the first chapters to the editor of *The Contemporary*, the leading literary magazine of St. Petersburg. After nearly two months of waiting he received the editor's enthusiastic acceptance, which made Leo "silly with joy." However, the editor enclosed no payment, but explained, in response to the young author's query, that the magazine never paid for first stories, but would be glad to pay him its highest rates (only half a cent a word at that) for future works. When completed and published, the novel became a success overnight; and Leo's name was hailed as one of the most promising in Russian contemporary literature.

With the prospect of earning money to liquidate his gambling debts, and of becoming a writer of note, he looked around for new subjects. He had not far to seek: his war experiences had provided him with first-hand material of the most adventurous kind. He began a series of sketches describing life at the front. No one else had done it with such powerful realism, and the Russian public fairly clamored for his stories as fast

MEN OF POWER

as he could publish them. When the first of them reached the eyes of the Czar, Alexander II, he promptly sent an order to the commander at Sevastopol "to take care of the life of that young man."

But when Tolstoy's realism did not spare the stupidities and crimes of military leaders, nor the folly of the whole war business; and when the suspicion got abroad that he was the author of certain doggerel songs, popular among the soldiers—songs which ridiculed the Russian conduct of the campaign—the censor began to bear down on him, and he came into high disfavor with the military authorities and lost his own chance of high promotion in the army. (He had attained the rank of lieutenant.) His diaries, however, record no regret at this. They are emphatic with self-criticism of his moral lapses and with his resolution to "correct myself of idleness, irritability, and lack of character."

The following year the Russians abandoned Sevastopol. The war ended, Tolstoy resigned from the army and returned to St. Petersburg. He was twenty-eight, his youth definitely over. He had become a writer of the first rank in Russia, and he knew what he wanted to do: to master the art of writing and to that end master himself. Only as he could accomplish these goals could he "do something about" Russia and the world. Entries in his diary in March, 1855, while still at the front in the siege of Sevastopol, reflect changes in Russia and in his own inner life:

LEO TOLSTOY

March 1. The Emperor died on February 18, and today we take the oath of allegiance to the new Emperor. Immense changes await Russia. One must work and be strong to take part in these great moments of Russia's life.

March 2-5. Have twice these last days worked at my project for the reorganization of the army for several hours at a time. Today I received communion. Yesterday a conversation about Divinity and Faith suggested to me a great, a stupendous idea to the realization of which I feel capable of devoting my life. That idea is the founding of a new religion corresponding to the present development of mankind: the religion of Christ but purged of dogmas and mysticism—a practical religion, not promising future bliss but giving bliss on earth. I understand that to accomplish this the conscientious labor of generations is necessary. One generation will bequeath the idea to the next, and some day fanaticism or reason will accomplish it. *Deliberately* to contribute to the union of man by religion is the basic thought which I hope will dominate me.

It will, in time. But his own battle with his lower nature is by no means won. The very next entry in the diary begins, "Have lost a further 200 rubles"—in gambling.

Attempting a Social Reform. Upon his return to St. Petersburg he found himself the literary lion of the hour. Editors, political and social leaders, writers, and common people everywhere welcomed and fêted him. For a few months he basked in this long-coveted glory. But early in 1856 he determined that the time was ripe

MEN OF POWER

for him to do something about the condition of the serfs in Russia. He would begin with those on his own estate. After several conferences with active liberals and officials of the government he finally hit upon one plan which the latter approved. He went at once to Yasnaya Polyana and laid it before the peasants. It was a scheme by which they were to lease from him for thirty years the land they cultivated, paying him a yearly rental of five rubles (between three and four dollars) for each 2.7 acres. At the end of the thirty years the land was to become the peasants' property. In the meantime they were to be free of any obligation to him beyond the payment of this rent. Liberal as these terms were, the serfs, after many and long conferences, rejected them. Word had spread among them that after the coronation of the new Emperor in August of 1856, they would all be liberated and would be given all their proprietors' property without payment of any kind.

His failure in this sincere attempt at what he hoped might be the beginning of the emancipation of the serfs throughout Russia plunged Tolstoy into gloom. To a friend he wrote: "A way out must be found. If within six months the serfs are not emancipated, there will be a conflagration. Everything is ready for it; treasonable hands are not lacking to light the fire of tumults and then the fire will spread everywhere. . . ." Sixty years passed before the prediction was fulfilled. The government staved it off by granting to the serfs

LEO TOLSTOY

modest allotments of land and compensating the owners with government bonds.

To Paris—and an Execution. Depressed over the situation on his own estate and despairing, for the moment, over Russia, he went to Paris early in the following year (1857). There he lived intensely and merrily—and remorsefully—among the literary men and women of the day, many of them Russians like himself who found life outside their country happier than in it. He spent several days with his great compatriot, Turgenev, who as an older writer had hailed Tolstoy's *Childhood* with enthusiasm. The two men, each admiring the other's work but irritated by his personality, formed a fierce friendship that lasted through six years of alternating quarrels and reconciliations, until it finally exploded in the challenge to a duel over a triviality—a duel which fortunately never came off.

After two months in the French capital Tolstoy wrote:

I do not foresee the time when the town will cease to interest me or this way of life will have lost its charm. I am crassly ignorant; nowhere have I been so much aware of it as here. . . . I also feel in this town that my ignorance is not irremediable. Moreover, the fine arts give me much delight: the Louvre, Versailles, the Conservatoire, the concerts, the theaters, the lectures . . . above all, this social liberty of which we have no idea in Russia.

MEN OF POWER

But the next day he received the impression that stuck longest in his memory. He attended an execution, and twenty-two years later the recollection of it was still vivid as he wrote in *My Confession*:

During my stay in Paris the sight of a public execution revealed to me the weakness of my superstitious belief in progress. When I saw the head divided from the body and heard the sound with which they fell separately into the box, I understood, not with my reason, but with my whole being, that no theory of the wisdom of all established things, nor of progress, could justify such an act. . . .

Introducing a New Kind of Education. When Tolstoy returned to Russia he found that the literary critics had been lambasting his recent writings. Piqued, yet recognizing the validity of much that they had said, he resolved to write no more. He went to Yasnaya Polyana and turned his attention again to his serfs. Since he could not liberate them by any plan they would accept he undertook to educate their children, for the government provided no schools to this end. Remembering how he had rebelled at the formal type of schooling he had had, he resolved to find some informal type that would stir children to want more rather than less.

Before opening his school he read all he could find on educational theory from Pestalozzi to Froebel—and came to the conclusion that the great pedagogues of the past were all wrong. He would find a new way—and he did. He wanted to produce creative rather

LEO TOLSTOY

than standardized minds. So he experimented with the children on his estate until he hit upon methods which produced that result. In this he anticipated the work of Montessori. He required no discipline whatever. No child had to attend. It was his business as teacher so to interest the children that they would want to come. He established a free and happy comradeship with them, allowing their own curiosity, stimulated by his questions and suggestions, to lead the way into their subjects of study. Some of the happiest experiences of his life grew out of these efforts.

At first only a dozen boys came. Before long these were arriving ahead of time for class. He told them stories—Bible stories, then folk-tales of old Russia and other lands. Next he encouraged them to invent their own stories, and here the individual talents of the various boys began to manifest themselves—this one had a keen sense for the dramatic, that one for the beautiful, a third for the realistic, and so on. When they had finished the story, they wanted it written so others might read it. They must, therefore, learn how to write—and to draw, for certainly such a masterpiece must be illustrated. Eagerly they entered upon these new subjects. Music followed with the same original methods and experiments. Studies were mixed with games in which the boys leaped upon Tolstoy's powerful frame and tried to roll him in the snow. Word got around that this was no "school" but a kind of daily picnic. The attendance jumped to forty, and by

MEN OF POWER

the end of a couple of years a score of such schools had started upon neighboring estates. Young pedagogues from the universities came out to work with Tolstoy, learned these new methods, and introduced them to an ever-expanding circle of new schools.

To extend further this type of education Tolstoy published a little monthly magazine which he called *Yasnaya Polyana*. In it he printed descriptions of each new experiment and many of the products of the children's efforts in composition. One of these peasant children's stories became so popular that he afterward patterned his *Twenty-Three Tales* after it. He discovered to his own happy surprise that these children of the soil often had a vividness and a dramatic effectiveness in narration that surpassed the power of mature artists in literature. To stimulate this ability further he began a series of primers and children's readers which to this day are still in use and printed in cheap editions by the hundreds of thousands. In all these, and in his numerous articles on pedagogy, he insisted that the fundamental principle of his educational system was that the teachers should be friends with the children first, and teachers second, and that they should teach by example and common participation rather than by formal instruction conveyed with the sanctions of force and punishment.

His Courtship and Marriage. These educational adventures came to a temporary halt with his marriage in September, 1862, to Miss Sophia Behrs, the daughter

LEO TOLSTOY

of one of his childhood sweethearts. Sophia was eighteen, he thirty-four. Her father at first objected to the match on the ground that the whole family had thought Tolstoy had been courting Sophia's older sister. But Leo had been so intensely in love with Sophia that for weeks he had come to the house hoping each night to muster the fortitude to declare himself to her and had talked more with the older sister only because he was too fearful to address the younger. One night he adopted the novel device (later used in *Anna Karenina* where Levin declares his love for Kitty) of explaining his position by writing out for her the following initials: I.y.f.e.a.f.i.a.t.m.a.y.s. Y.a.T.m.d.i. By some strange intuition Sophia guessed its meaning: "In your family exists a false idea as to me and your sister. You and Tanichka must destroy it." When she nodded her affirmation he wrote again: Y.y.a.d. f.h.r.m.t.v.o.m.a.a.a.t.i.o.h. She guessed that, too: "Your youth and desire for happiness remind me too vividly of my advanced age and the impossibility of happiness." What could any girl say to that? She had been in love with him since, years before, he had told her fairy stories and played games with her, but still this was hardly a proposal.

Tolstoy some days later wrote out his declaration in a note, but even then he could bring himself to present it to her only by casting the thing on the lap of Fate. If during the older sister's singing of a certain song that night she should hit a certain high note accurately,

MEN OF POWER

he would count the omen propitious and deliver his proposal; if not—but she did, and Sophia said “yes.” After such a courtship a parental objection seemed a small hurdle indeed. A much more serious one he presented himself: he felt it only fair that Sophia should know the worst about him; so he gave her his diary in which he had recorded it—all of it—sparing nothing. She read it, wept through one night over its disillusioning revelations, then forgave him.

Being the wife of a genius, especially one as intense as Tolstoy, is no bed of roses for any woman. But Sophia endured it, conquered it, and achieved for both of them a rare happiness—at least for the first fifteen years of their married life. She bore him thirteen children, managed his business affairs far better than he had ever been able to do, entertained his never-ending stream of visitors, and copied and re-copied his almost illegible manuscripts. To be sure, there were occasional squalls on the matrimonial sea, but she piloted their way through them. To a friend, after six years, she wrote, “We sometimes have misunderstandings, but they come from such subtle spiritual causes that they would not come if we did not love. . . . I love him only more and more . . . with the same anxiety, and passion, and jealousy, and poetry as ever. . . .”

With such a generous wife reconciliations followed disagreements, and life went dramatically on. Tolstoy, too, was supremely contented. He, with her help, tamed his lower nature, gave up gambling, dissipation,

LEO TOLSTOY

and escapades with other women. He concentrated all his enormous energies upon his writing and the rearing of a happy family. They made their home at Yasnaya Polyana as nearly as they could like that of his own merry childhood days. To his cousin, the Countess Alexandra, he wrote: "I am now a writer with all the strength of my soul, and I write and meditate on my work as I never before wrote or meditated. I am a happy and serene husband and father, having no secrets from anybody. . . ."

His Great Novels. The fifteen years following his marriage saw the creation of his most important literary works, particularly his great novels, *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*. The first of these is a huge panorama of mankind, but focused upon Russia at the time of her struggles with Napoleon. During the seven years of exhausting labor he devoted to it, Tolstoy once wrote to a correspondent, "If I were told that I could write a novel in which I would indisputably formulate all of my social and political views, I would not spend two years on such a novel; if, however, I were told that what I would write would be read twenty years from now by those who are now children, and that while reading it, they would laugh and cry, and would learn to love life, I would devote all my life and all my energies to such a work." This is the sort of novel he produced in *War and Peace*. It vibrates with the joyous, passionate acceptance of life. In scope, artistry of expression, and vivid power of character and story it

MEN OF POWER

can be compared only with Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Concentrating upon it, he wrote all day long and far into the night throughout the winters and most of the summers of those seven years. His wife, according to her brother, copied seven times in her own handwriting the entire script, an almost incredible feat considering its great length (twenty-five hundred printed pages) and her heavy burdens as mother and hostess. The work, when finally completed and published, became a best seller, was translated into nearly every European language, and is today one of the most popular of Russian classics.

"Written out" for the time being, he turned again to his schools, to playing with his children, and to bee-farming. He read Schopenhauer and Kant, then the principal dramatists from Shakespeare to Goethe, then took up Greek, mastered it, and enjoyed himself reading Homer in the original.

Restored in strength and spirit, he plunged with his characteristic intensity into the writing of *Anna Karenina*, a psychological novel upon the eternal sex question. He wrote the first draft of it in two months, but spent three years in re-working and expanding it. The central idea in it is that sex relations should be governed by "pure Christian love," and not by self-centered passion, on the one hand, or by sense of duty to church or society, on the other. He takes two pairs of lovers and endows the first, Anna and Vronsky, with all the outer equipment in body and circumstance that one

LEO TOLSTOY

could ask. But this pair, through their material-mindedness and fear for their own personal happiness, ruin their lives. The second pair, Kitty and Levin, with less outer but more inner equipment, find the way to happiness through sacrifice, forgiveness, and the co-operative effort to help one another. This, Tolstoy holds, is the Christian way.

The outstanding difference between these great novels and those written before his marriage is this: in the earlier ones he concerned himself primarily with a detailed and realistic description of life as he saw it and experienced it; in the later ones, while he abated nothing of this marvelous power of description and character portrayal, he revealed his growing sense of moral responsibility. He did not preach; he endeavored, rather, to discover the inner truth of life as well as its outer drama.

Anna Karenina, upon whose thirteen hundred pages his wife labored almost as many long hours in copying and proofreading as he in writing, proved even more popular, especially in England and America, than *War and Peace*. Time and again during its composition Tolstoy was so discouraged with himself and what he considered his diminishing talent that he wanted to throw the manuscript into the fire, and would have done so except for the comforting praise and encouragement of his wife and the few intimate friends who appreciated its value. But when it reached publication in serial form, everyone from the Winter Palace of the

MEN OF POWER

Emperor to the poorest university student became absorbed in it. The severest critics had nothing but praise for it. Dostoevsky, whose own star was rising, ran about "waving his arms and calling Tolstoy 'the god of art'." In a series of articles which he devoted to *Anna Karenina* he called it "unprecedented, incomparable," and asked, "Who of our writers can compare with Tolstoy? And in Europe—whoever wrote anything that could approach it?" Verily, the little boy who had once tried so hopefully to fly by clasping his knees and jumping from a second-story window had now succeeded by clasping a pen. No one in all the literary heavens soared higher.

His Spiritual Crisis. But his soaring soon ended. The ancient Greeks believed that the gods did not look kindly upon an ambitious man who climbed too near their exalted thrones. Their jealousy devised some disaster that would fling him back to earth. So it was with Tolstoy. Within the next two years Death, which had always had for him a strange and frightful fascination, struck five times at his family, and each time bore away a loved one. First it was his youngest son, then his beloved Aunt Tatanya, then another child, then an infant stillborn from his wife, desperately ill, then another aunt. In the presence of these catastrophes all his wealth and fame and even his genius seemed but baubles. Shaken as he had never been before, he directed his thoughts inward and began to ask himself the questions that have perplexed troubled souls since

LEO TOLSTOY

the beginning of time: What was the meaning of life? What was man's destiny? What lay beyond the portals of Death?

To these he added others pointing directly to himself: Why was he, Tolstoy, here? He had mastered his lower nature, but had he been true to his higher nature? Had he not made it serve only his own selfish ends? Death would strike at him some day; was he ready to give an accounting of the talents and powers bestowed upon him? As he pondered these questions all the happiness of the past twelve years turned to anguish. Had he been living in a fool's paradise? Had he wasted his time on things temporal and shut his ears and his heart to the call of the eternal?

He found no answer within his own mind. He sought the woods and roamed about as in a fever not knowing whither he went, and found no answer there. He tried to forget himself in work, but a new question rose to haunt him: What *for*? He would go back to his teaching—but, teach *what*? His wife wrote in her diary:

It pains me; I cannot see him such as he has become. Dejected, drooping, he passively sits for entire days and weeks without work, without joy, without energy; and he seems to have reconciled himself to that condition. This is like a moral death; I do not want to see it in him, nor can he himself go on living like that. . . .⁴

⁴ Quoted by Alexander I. Nazaroff, *Tolstoy, the Inconstant Genius*, Stokes, 1929, p. 203.

MEN OF POWER

Tolstoy himself did not want to go on living like that. He contemplated suicide and had to remove from his room a rope which again and again suggested that escape. "There is always time for that," he muttered, and returned to his brooding.

My Confession reflects the purgatorial fires through which he struggled in these years of torment. It is a little book of less than eighty pages, but one of the half-dozen great classics of spiritual autobiography. In it he records his agonizing attempts to find the meaning of life, damns mercilessly his sins and the errors into which his ambition and pride had led him, and traces the steps by which he ultimately found his way to a new faith. ("Faith" he defines as "the knowledge of the meaning of human life; in consequence of which man does not destroy himself, but lives. Faith is the force of life.") He searches the philosophies and theologies of mankind from Socrates and Buddha to Schopenhauer, but finds them sterile. He examines the ways by which contemporary men and women of culture have sought the answers to the questions that now hound him—and discards them all. From the wise and cultured he turns to the working classes, and here he thinks he discovers the answer. The peasants live simply and humbly, providing bread for the world. He mingles more and more among them, dresses like them, sleeps at their inns, goes on pilgrimages with them. The more he studies them the more he becomes convinced that a true faith is among them, that their

LEO TOLSTOY

faith is for them a necessary thing which alone gives them a meaning for life.

In direct opposition to what I saw in our circle—where life without faith was possible, and where not one in a thousand professed himself a believer—amongst the people there was not a single unbeliever in a thousand. In direct opposition to what I saw in our circle—where a whole life is spent in idleness, amusement, and dissatisfaction with life—I saw among the people whose lives passed in heavy labor and unrepining content. . . . In contradiction to the theory that the less learned we are the less we understand the meaning of life, and see in our sufferings and death but an evil joke, these men of the people live, suffer, and draw near to death, in quiet confidence and oftenest with joy. . . .

I began to grow attached to these men. The more I learned of their lives . . . the more I liked them, and the easier I felt it so to live. I lived in this way during two years; and then there came a change which had long been preparing in me, and the symptoms of which I had always dimly felt: the life of our circle of rich and learned men not only became repulsive, but lost all meaning. All our actions, our reasoning, our science and art, all appeared to me in a new light. I understood that it was all child's play, that it was useless to seek a meaning in it. The life of the working classes, of the whole of mankind, of those who create life, appeared to me in its true significance. I understood that this was life itself, and that the meaning given to this life was true, and I accepted it.⁵

⁵ *My Confession.*

MEN OF POWER

Having found the basic meaning of life in the common and necessary tasks of production and creation, he next came to the conclusion that man is so constituted that he cannot live for himself alone, but only finds happiness when he lives for others in the performance of the common tasks. But where is the source of power by which man may live as he ought? Tolstoy found that source in God. When he believed in God he lived; when he denied God, or failed to seek Him, life lost its zest. "I really live only when I am conscious of and seek Him. 'What more, then do I seek?' a voice seemed to cry within me, 'This is He, He without whom there is no life. To know God and to live are one. God is life.' "

And thus the vital force was renewed in me, and I began again to live. I renounced the life of our class; for I had come to confess that it was not life, but only the semblance of life, that its superfluous luxuries prevent the possibility of understanding life, and that in order to understand life, I must understand not the life of exceptional people, the parasites, but the life of the simple working classes, the life that fashions life, and gives it the meaning which the working classes accept. The simple laboring men around me were the Russian people, and I turned to this people and to the meaning which it gives to life. . . .

To live after God's word, one must renounce all the pleasures of life, must labor, be humble, endure, and be meek. This, to the people, is the meaning of the whole system of faith, as it has come down to them through,

LEO TOLSTOY

and is now given them by, the pastors of their Church and the traditions which exist among them.⁶

He returned to the church—but not for long. He was shocked by its perversion of Christ's teaching. He heard the priests pray "for the victory of our Christ-loving armies." He saw the church sanction capital punishment and the execution of youthful political offenders. He recoiled from its attitude of hostility and persecution toward other churches. So after three years of trying faithfully to fulfill all his obligations to the church he abandoned it forever. But he did not renounce the Christian religion. He sought to separate "the central elements of truth in the Christian teaching from the dirt and filth with which it was defiled in the church's presentation of it."

My Religion. The progress and result of that search he set down in three books: *Critique of Dogmatic Theology*, *Harmony and Translation of the Four Gospels*, and *My Religion*. In their preparation he spent nearly five years of the most arduous toil, studying the Old and New Testaments in the original Hebrew and Greek, reading all available commentaries, and the principal books on theology—and in the end presented to the world his conclusions with the simplicity and power that characterize only the greatest of religious documents. We can deal here—and briefly—only with a summary of the position at which he finally arrived.

He held the Sermon on the Mount to be the center

⁶ *Ibid.*

MEN OF POWER

of Christian teaching, and that Jesus sounded the keynote of that sermon in these three words: *Resist not evil*.

When I understood that the words "*Resist not evil*" meant *resist not evil*, my whole former conception of Christ's teaching suddenly changed; and I was horrified, not that I had failed to understand it before, but that I had misunderstood it so strangely.

I knew, as we all know, that the true significance of Christ's doctrine was comprised in the injunction to love one's neighbor. When we say, "Turn the other cheek," "Love your enemies," we express the very essence of Christianity. I knew all that from childhood; but why had I failed to understand these simple words? Why had I always sought for some ulterior meaning? "*Resist not evil*" means never resist, never oppose violence; or, in other words, never do anything contrary to the law of love.⁷

To this basic law of Christianity Tolstoy added the four commandments which, he held, constitute the substance of the Christian way of life: Do not be angry; Do not give way to lust; Do not foreswear yourself (do not, that is, give away the control of your future actions); and Love all men, including your enemies, making no distinction of races and peoples.

Life, according to Tolstoy's new-found faith, is a gift to all men for the benefit of all. No man who uses his life for himself will inherit the eternal life. Eternal life he interpreted in terms of being in harmony with

⁷ *My Religion*.

LEO TOLSTOY

the laws of the universe, living according to the will of God, and in a relationship of peace, good will, and mutual aid with his fellow men. His creed he stated simply:

I believe in Christ's teaching.

I believe that my happiness is possible on earth only when all men fulfill Christ's teaching.

I believe that the fulfillment of this teaching is possible, easy, and pleasant.

I believe that even now, when this teaching is not fulfilled, if I should be the only one among all those that do not fulfill it, there is nevertheless nothing else for me to do for the salvation of my life from the certainty of eternal loss but to fulfill this teaching, just as a man in a burning house, if he finds a door of safety, must go out.

I believe that my life according to the teaching of the world has been a torment, and that a life according to Christ's teaching can alone give me in the world the happiness for which I was destined by the Father of Life.

I believe that this teaching will give welfare to all humanity, will save me from inevitable destruction, and will give me in this world the greatest happiness. Consequently, I cannot help fulfilling it.⁸

Reconstructing His Life. These religious principles had practical implications, immediate and revolutionary for Tolstoy's way of life. Before he had completed the writing of *My Religion* he was asked to help take a new census of Moscow. He chose the poorest section

⁸ *Ibid.*

MEN OF POWER

of the city. He saw then, as he had never seen before, the poverty and destitution of the workers. He visited the hovels and tenements of the poor whose condition was far more wretched than that of the serfs on his own estate. On one occasion he went to a night lodging-house for the destitute.

I went upstairs. There men were taking their places. Among them I saw one of those to whom I had given money. On seeing him I suddenly felt dreadfully ashamed and hurried away; and feeling as if I had committed a crime I left the house and went home. There, ascending the carpeted steps to the cloth-carpeted hall and taking off my fur coat, I sat down to a five-course dinner.⁹

The contrast between his plenty and their poverty gave him no peace. But the only reaction he could get from his cultured and wealthy town friends was polite disinterest. Yes, the poor wretches live that way, but it is their own fault; none of our business, don't bother us with it. Too horrible to be bothered with. Such disdain and irresponsibility was the very thing needed to convince Tolstoy that money was the root of all evil. It destroyed all who touched it. He tried various relief measures, and further investigation, but made barely a dent in the huge problem. His failure convinced him that the real problem could be met only by changing the system which degraded men in such a fashion.

⁹ Maude, *op. cit.*, II, 91.

LEO TOLSTOY

As one result of this experience he wrote, *What Shall We Do, Then?* in which he endeavored to apply Christian principles to economic and social life. Poverty, slavery, war exist in the world, he contended, because men have not been willing to live by the principles of Christ's teaching. The only way, in the present order, by which a man can release himself from enslaving or exploiting others is by refusing to own lands, possess money, or serve the present form of government. Men must learn again the dignity of physical labor; it will destroy the false and expensive habits which the rich have acquired. It will bring men closer to the soil and force them to live the simple life.

He practiced what he preached. He left Moscow and returned to Yasnaya Polyana, where he could be closer to the soil and the peasants he had come to love. He wore peasant garb—sheepskin coat and cap and high boots. He called upon his friends in this attire. He refused to use his title. He gave up the use of money, never carried it about with him, and now, in contrast to his previous generosity, declined to give to beggars. He made his own study as severely simple, with a plain table and a couple of chairs, as a monk's cell. He ate coarse food, such as the serfs had. He swept the floor himself, worked in his own fields shoulder to shoulder with the serfs, and learned how to make his own boots. An artist named Gay, who shared his beliefs and came often to stay with him, joined him in these humble tasks. Whenever a new peasant house had to be built

MEN OF POWER

upon the estate, Tolstoy and Gay appointed themselves masons of the great stone stove which was a feature of every such abode. "In proportion as he simplified his own life, grew careless of externalities, stood one side from the pleasures and occupations of his class and station, he began to see the world with new eyes, and a sense of its inequalities, follies, and miseries came upon him like a tide."¹⁰

At the sight of the hunger, cold, and degradation of multitudes of people, he came to understand, "not with my mind or my heart but with my whole being, that the existence of tens of thousands of such people in Moscow while I and thousands of others overeat ourselves with beefsteaks is a crime—no matter what all the learned men in the world may say about its necessity—a crime, committed not once but constantly; and that I with my luxury not merely tolerate it but share in it." He resolved to have no further part in this crime and to abolish it if he could.

The climax of his renunciations came when he renounced all his property. He transferred his lands and serfs to his wife and children. He would have preferred to have his family join him in his poverty, but they could neither understand his views nor sympathize with him in his struggle, much as they loved him. Since most of the property had been a family inheritance it was only right that the family should now have it. He

¹⁰ Gaius Glenn Atkins, *Pilgrims of the Lonely Road*, Revell, 1913, p. 317.

LEO TOLSTOY

renounced also the royalties on the books he wrote after 1880. The Countess objected to this on the ground that they too belonged to the family (certainly she had earned a share in them) and not to Tolstoy alone, and that in giving away the copyrights he was giving away family income needed to maintain the estate. But Tolstoy had his way, and she submitted, unreconciled.

Living a humble, simple life, and as nearly as he humanly could according to the Christian principles he had formulated, Tolstoy continued to write on social and religious questions until his death. His most important work in this period was undoubtedly *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*. He composed it while directing relief work over a large area among starving peasants during a famine. It deals with the application of the Christian way of life to international relations. It made him famous as the world's most uncompromising apostle of international peace. He differed from earlier peace advocates in not basing his plea upon international agreements, treaties, and leagues of the powerful, but by an appeal to the conscience of humanity. He would remove the causes of war by securing economic justice between the Haves and the Have-nots, and he would persuade every man of the sacredness of human life so that he would refuse to serve in an army. Following this work came still a multitude of pamphlets, essays, and articles, all hammering away with undiminished vigor upon the theme

MEN OF POWER

that had come to master his life—the application of the principles of Christ to the daily life of the individual, the community, the world.

The Opposition He Faced. For the last thirty years of his life—that is, from the spiritual crisis that followed the publication of *Anna Karenina* until his death—he struggled against opposition on every side. The government banned his religious and social writings, so that they had to be published abroad and often in inadequate translations. The church excommunicated him. The members of his class ridiculed or hated him—with the exception of a few who believed in him. His own family regarded him as a great artist who had turned religious fanatic, although they continued to love him. He came more and more to look and feel like an old Hebrew prophet or a John the Baptist crying in the wilderness. Even his followers must be reckoned among his opponents, for they copied his external traits and never understood the leaven that worked within him. He thought the “Tolstoyites” an incomprehensible sect far removed from his way of thinking. “I shall soon be dead,” he once predicted, “and some people will say that Tolstoy taught men to plow and reap and make boots; while the chief thing I have been trying so hard to say all my life, the thing I believe in, the most important of all, they will forget.”

Perhaps the most difficult to bear of all this opposition was the growing estrangement with his wife. She had not followed him in his spiritual odyssey. He

LEO TOLSTOY

tried in vain to explain his conversion—but she didn't want him converted; she had loved him, admired him, and believed in him as he was. One of the most moving scenes in the whole literature of biography is that in which he, in a moment of intense spiritual agony over his sense of aloneness, turned his back upon her, already in labor over one of their daughters, and left the house, not knowing whither he went or that he would ever return. He did return, but the rift between them continued to widen. They differed over sex relationships. She considered his *Kreutzer Sonata* a personal reflection upon herself and resented it. Yet it was she who finally secured its publication in Russia. They differed over religious questions, for she remained a loyal member of the Orthodox Church. And they differed over accepting income from his books which she had helped prepare.

Last Days. His death came as a tragic denouement of this long domestic struggle. Life at Yasnaya Polyana had become so filled with bickering over such matters that he no longer found it possible to live there in any peace of spirit. On the night of October 28, 1910, he collected some manuscripts, a few clothes, bade good-bye to friends at the house, left a touching farewell note to his wife, and early the following morning drove away with his friend, Dr. Makovitsky. He went to visit his sister Mary in a convent several hours distant. On the journey he contracted a cold from exposure to a chilling rain. At the convent his

MEN OF POWER

youngest daughter caught up with him and told him that his wife had tried to commit suicide when she had learned of his departure. Restrained from this, she was probably even now in search of him. Determined to avoid a painful scene, and not to renew the old conflict between his faith and his surroundings at Yasnaya Polyana, but to leave the country, he and his daughter and the doctor hurriedly took a train for the border. But his cold developed into pneumonia, the train was stopped, and the party lodged in the home of a kindly station-master. There Tolstoy lingered for ten days in great pain as his strength failed and life ebbed. Even then he continued to write, dictating to his daughter some last "Thoughts on God" for his diary. The distraught Countess found him and knelt by his bedside after he had lost consciousness.

The news of his passing flashed across Russia. The government breathed a sigh of relief; the newspapers carried black bands of mourning; the peasants flocked to the funeral train to catch a last glimpse of their beloved champion; and the Holy Synod forbade all masses for his soul or any reference in the churches to his life or his works. As he had requested, he was buried at Yasnaya Polyana on that spot where long before his brother Nicholas had buried the green stick on which was written "the secret that should destroy all evil in men and give them great blessing."

Failures—and Power. Ever since then men in every country and every walk of life have asked, Did Tolstoy

LEO TOLSTOY

find that secret? Many have answered, No, and have pointed to his own failures. He had failed to convince his own family. He had failed to persuade most of the intelligent and cultured people of Russia. He had failed often to be consistent in his own views. He had failed to recognize the necessity of the differentiation of labor in the modern world, and the necessity for a strong government. He had failed in his peaceful efforts to rehabilitate the submerged ninety per cent of Russia's vast population. He had failed to prevent the bloody revolution by which the poor and oppressed, a few years later, were to gain their freedom and the land they had so long cultivated. No, he was a spiritual anarchist, interesting and provocative indeed, but futile. He even failed to save his own life from struggle and sorrow.

But others answer, Yes, he failed in all these—but so did Socrates, Jesus, Joan of Arc, and every other prophet and saint. Socrates was poisoned, Jesus hung on a cross, Joan burned at the stake. We cannot judge any life by its immediate success or failure. God himself never seems to make good—until the centuries have had their say. Because Tolstoy lived and struggled and wrote, the whole race has had its spiritual horizons lifted, its conscience quickened. No one has ever accused Tolstoy of sentimentalism—he was the most uncompromising of realists—yet he stirred men to pity as few writers have ever done. And pity is the rebel passion out of which come the great movements

MEN OF POWER

for human betterment. Out of his own compassion for the serfs came his schools for their children—and the fresh and companionable methods he originated in those schools are today taken for granted in progressive education. Out of his compassion for men and women in every station and of every race came his labors for peace which have fired the hearts and minds of sensitive men around the world to challenge war and the economic injustices that cause it. Out of his compassion he wrote his great novels as well as his later religious and social tracts. He surrounded his characters with his affections. He saw through them with love. He wrote in a language almost unknown outside his own country, but he created characters who have become “brothers and sisters to all humanity.”

And out of his compassion, after he had tamed his lower nature, he entered upon the heroic struggle to master his higher nature as well and make it serve not only the privileged few of his class, but the multitudes who had neither lands, nor schools, nor freedom, and who knew no way of life but the way of violence. In that struggle he completely revolutionized his own life—from wealth to poverty, from pride to humility, from passion to self-control, from selfishness to service, from hatred to love, from warfare to “resist not evil.”

That compassion penetrating and moving through his life and works was, perhaps, the ultimate source of his power. Behind all the contradictions in him we recognize in Tolstoy, as Gaius Glenn Atkins says, “a real

LEO TOLSTOY

courage, ... an endeavor to simplify and at the same time to elevate life which has made the man who lived as a monk, swung the scythe like a peasant, worked with his awl and waxed ends as a cobbler, wrote as only the great masters of all literature may write, repented as St. Peter, and loved in his more tender moments as one to whom much has been forgiven, one of the great forces of a troubled time, a man who swayed the ideals of the dreamers of two continents, and who became himself one of the most tenderly loved men of the last two generations." ¹¹

If that is failure—let his detractors make the most of it!

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 325.



JOHN BURROUGHS

1837-1921

"MAY I have a dollar to buy an algebra?" asked a twelve-year-old boy as he stood before his farmer father.

"What's an algebra?" inquired the man. The boy explained. "No," answered his father loudly, "you don't need that on a farm." The boy coaxed, but in vain. At last he turned away toward the village. As he trudged up the hill, his mother pleaded his cause. Just as the lad reached the top of the hill the man called in his strident voice, "Well, I guess you can get one." But by this time the boy's blood was up, and he had resolved to earn the money himself for the algebra and the other books he coveted. He would boil maple sap, sell the sugar, and the books would be all the sweeter.

JOHN BURROUGHS

That boy was John Burroughs, the year about 1849. Thousands of boys have been born on American farms, have pulled stumps, plowed fields, dug potatoes, milked cows, sheared sheep, turned grindstones, pitched hay, threshed grain, and boiled maple sap. But there has been only one John Burroughs who struggled through the frustrations of these humble and necessary occupations until he developed such a kinship with nature that he could interpret her language to sensitive souls everywhere. No one did more to open the eyes of Americans and Europeans of the nineteenth century to an appreciation of nature in her rural dress.

Before he began his work of interpretation probably no school taught nature study. Today no good school is without it. Until he came along, most of his generation looked upon nature as something to be fought, harnessed, exploited. After him an ever-increasing number saw her as a beneficent mother to be cherished. Before him, birds were flying targets for guns; after him, they were friends and helpers. To be sure, he was not the only nature-lover of his times. Audubon, Thoreau, Whitman, Muir, and others were kindred spirits. But none of them struck their roots deeper into the soil, and none extended their branches over a wider area of appreciation. He lived a quiet life, though not without struggle, but he developed power.

His Ancestors. John Burroughs came from a long line of farmers. For two hundred years, with only

MEN OF POWER

occasional exceptions,¹ they had tilled the soil of Connecticut and New York. They loved the land and the independence of those who worked upon it. They saw no beauty in it, but for that matter they saw no beauty in anything unless it might be in the heaven they aspired to when their labors in this world ceased. Beauty was a luxury; independence a necessity. Unlettered, hard-working, and free, they toiled early and late, produced milk, butter, cheese, and wool, read their Bibles, paid their debts, and raised large families to carry on the same sequence. John was the first member of the clan to break the routine, and he was considered an ugly duckling.

On the paternal side his forebears had been largely English. His grandfather, Eden Burroughs, in 1795 had migrated with his wife Rachel from Stamford, Delaware County, New York, to Roxbury in the same county, cutting their way through the woods and bringing their goods and chattels on a sled drawn by a yoke of oxen. There among the low Catskill Mountains above the village they built a log house on a farm of three hundred and twenty acres, established their home, and raised nine children. Eden was a quiet, peace-loving man, thrifty and serious-minded—an Old School Baptist. Rachel worked with him in the fields, helped

¹ Among the exceptions were Rev. George Burroughs, a Harvard graduate, who in 1692 was hanged in Salem as a witch; and Rev. John C. Burroughs, a Yale graduate, who became the first president of the first Chicago University.

JOHN BURROUGHS

make sugar, spun wool, wove cloth, and made the clothing for her brood. Both Eden and Rachel died in their seventies.

On the maternal side, John's ancestors were Irish and Welsh; and from them he inherited a strain of mysticism, his "dreaming, shirking ways," and his "tinge of melancholy." His maternal grandfather, Edmund Kelly, had served in the War of the Revolution and had endured the long winter at Valley Forge with George Washington. He fought also in the War of 1812. Edmund made a deep impression on his grandson, not however because of his military exploits, but rather because of his hair-raising stories of spooks and witches. These so fascinated and frightened young John that for many years he was afraid of the dark. Edmund's only other memorable characteristics seem to have been an aversion for work, a fondness for Bible-study, and a passion for trout-fishing. His wife was a large, uneducated, and practical woman who, in addition to doing much of the work her husband evaded, reared ten children and "made every one of them toe the mark."

John's father, Chauncey Burroughs, born in 1803, had the sturdier qualities of his family. He had received an elementary education in the three R's and had taught a rural school for one or two winters. As a youth he had been rebellious and quarrelsome and had violated the conventional patterns of behavior by indulging in horse-racing and card-playing. In early

MEN OF POWER

manhood, however, he had "experienced religion," joined the Old School Baptist Church, and thereafter led an "exemplary life." Honest but bigoted, hard-working but intolerant, kind-hearted but loud-mouthed, he was counted by his neighbors a good citizen. He improved his farm and held fast to his faith. As a father his children knew him as gruff and blustering, but not unaffectionate. He threatened much, but inflicted little. His harsh and strident voice could be heard for half a mile, but his bark was worse than his bite. His manners were as harsh as his voice; he probably never said "Thank you" in his life. He never understood his son John and feared if the boy persisted in his pursuit of learning he might become a Methodist preacher—than which an Old School Baptist could imagine no worse fate. So he refused any financial help on John's education beyond the elementary stages.

He would have understood his son's ambition had it been to acquire a farm of his own or even to enter some form of evangelistic work for the Old School Baptists—but ambitions toward literature were beyond his ken.

Chauncey Burroughs' reading consisted of the Bible, the hymnbook, a weekly secular paper, and a monthly religious journal. Although he probably never read any of his son John's writings—yet when one of his daughters showed him an article about John and a picture of him in a magazine, he sat silently for a time, his eyes filled with tears. From what thoughts or

JOHN BURROUGHS

feelings the tears sprang no one knew; he was inarticulate. In his old age when he needed help, John was the only one of the children who could or would give it. In spite of a craggy personality and earthbound vision he had within him the stuff of the pioneers.

John's mother, Amy Kelly Burroughs, belonged to that race of farm women who physically and spiritually seem to have been made of iron. In addition to bearing ten children and nursing all of them, she made the soap, spun the flax and wool, wove the family's garments and carpets, baked the bread, knit the socks and mittens, made comforters and quilts, dried the apples, and canned the berries, preserves, and pickles. She never had a vacation, but spent many an extra hour in helping with the work in the fields. Long after her children had gone to bed she would sit by the light of a candle mending and patching their clothes. She taught them to help, of course; her family was an economic as well as a social unit. Together they made more than two tons of butter annually and great quantities of cheese. She had only enough schooling to enable her to read. She could not write or cipher. Her picture shows her of large frame with high forehead, deep-set eyes, strong nose, and firm mouth. John described her as "a woman of great emotional capacity who felt more than she thought."

Never light-hearted or vivacious, she seemed to carry around with her the sense of the seriousness of the Revolutionary times of her own childhood and the sad-

MEN OF POWER

ness which motherhood and the care of her large family had brought upon her. Yet underneath the surface John felt that there was a deep spring of love and pity which expressed itself not in words but in a life of labor wholly devoted to her home and children.

She counted John her favorite son and was always interceding with his father to buy books for the boy. Yet she never read any of John's own works except a few of his verses. Her happiest days were those she spent picking berries in the fields. Like her husband, she was an Old School Baptist, but unlike him she was meditative rather than argumentative in matters of religion.

His Early Home. In this farm home among the beautiful Catskills, John was born on April 3, 1837. Here he spent the first seventeen years of his life. The farm bent over the hills and dipped into the valleys where trout streams sparkled among the woods. The house was large, unpainted, and weatherworn. Of the ten Burroughs children he was the seventh child and fifth son. The family, as we have said, was an economic as well as a social unit. Its income was derived from the production of butter and cheese for the New York market. The cow, as the source of the wealth of the community, was almost a rural divinity. "I have a sort of filial regard for the cow," he wrote in after years. "She seems in a remote kind of way like the old family nurse." His days were largely occupied with tending cows, driving them to and from pasture, salt-

JOHN BURROUGHS

ing them, cleaning their stables, and feeding their calves. There was plowing to be done, of course; corn, oats, rye, buckwheat, and clover to be planted; berries and apples to be picked; and wood to be cut and carried in.

Before he was five years old he entered the rural school, where he learned to read and write and cipher. At first, like most youngsters of those times, he attended during the summer; but after he reached the age of eleven or twelve the farm work claimed him, and his schooling was confined to the winter months. Books were hard to get. There were no public libraries, and father Burroughs could seldom be persuaded to part with one of his hard-earned dollars to buy any but the most elementary texts.

The neighboring farms also had large families, so that John had no lack of companions of his own age. Yet he alone achieved distinction. Why? Not because he worked harder; every man, woman, and child had to work. But the other children were content to work with their hands. John from childhood seemed to be filled with curiosity. He wanted to know the why of things. His head kept asking questions about the constituency of the soil and the habits of birds and animals. His heart sought a yet deeper understanding of man's origin and destiny and his place in the scheme of nature. His parents and the other children considered him odd, and this drove him more than ever to seek the companionship of nature. He spent much

MEN OF POWER

time alone in the woods and on the hills and beside the brooks. As a boy he had probably not heard of Wordsworth else he would have committed to memory as the expression of his own meditations those lines written half a century earlier above Tintern Abbey.

I have learned

To look on nature hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime,
Of something far more deeply interfused.

Scenes From His Boyhood. In his essays he has given us many a vivid picture of these early years. From them the following snapshots are selected to help us see and understand the growing boy. The first shows him as a child of three beside his baby sister, rocking her cradle as he watches his mother at the spinning wheel. In the next he is in the rural school trying to get into his head the distinction between the letters "b" and "d", and "c" and "e", and finally exulting because he succeeds before a larger boy. A little later we see him riding a stone boat to a neighbor's and playing there in the haymow with a little girl who, like him, loves to dramatize the familiar activities of farm life. A scene of darker colors reveals him and his brothers and sisters after listening in terrified wonder to grandfather Kelly spinning yarns of ghosts and hob-

JOHN BURROUGHS

goblins, huddling fearfully in the corner awaiting the onslaught of these dreadful creatures. In a brighter picture a few years later we observe him overcoming his fear of the dark in order to call upon his childhood sweetheart.

Most of his recollections center around his early experiences and observations of birds and animals. On one occasion he witnesses a great migration of pigeons—so many thousands of them that they blacken the sky. They pour down upon the hillside near his home, covering the ground and the trees until the world seems to be blanketed with pigeons. Seizing the musket, he creeps along a stone wall until he is within easy shooting distance. He levels the gun and sights along its barrel. But he does not pull the trigger. Instead, he sits there spellbound until with a great whir of wings the mass of pigeons surges upward again. Why he fails to shoot, he cannot afterward understand. He has a similar experience one chilly day in early December when he is ten or twelve. This time it is a red fox which comes loping past within fifty feet of him. He has the same old musket in his hand. There is a bounty upon these animals, and he needs the money he might so easily gain. But again his opportunity to make the kill is lost as he gives his whole attention to observing the fox and the way it runs. To his family he makes the lame excuse that he didn't shoot because he had his mitten on and could not reach the trigger of his gun. The family thinks he has the mitten on his wits; and

MEN OF POWER

for years afterward when he fails in anything they say, "John had his mitten on, I guess."

Chores about the house and work in the fields occupy most of his time; but often, in the early evening, he slips away to the woods to see where some peculiar sound is coming from. On a typical occasion of this kind we find him creeping among the rushes at the edge of a swamp. Scrooching down he waits quietly until a tiny frog comes climbing up a bulrush near him and, perching near its top, begins to pipe. The boy stretches out his hand, captures the little creature, and holds it gently until, losing its fear, it inflates its throat and tunes up again. Years later he identifies it as the hyla. In like manner he studies the ways of other animals and of birds and insects until he learns the mysteries of their varied ways of life.

Of all the work of the farm he likes best the sugar-making. To him every maple tree has a character all its own. He knows how much sap to expect from each. From tree to tree he goes in early March, inserting into each trunk a spout through which the sap may drip into a milk pan. Then, days later when the snowbanks are melting, the robins and nuthatches caroling, the bluebirds flitting over him, and the crows walking about the bare ground, he hangs across his shoulders a yoke bearing two large pails. He trudges from tree to tree emptying the sap from the milk pans into these pails and transferring it to the great hogsheads waiting for it on the ox-drawn sled. Boiling of the sap is a

JOHN BURROUGHS

two-day process in which two or three hundred pailfuls are reduced to four or five of syrup. He carries these four or five pails to the house, where he strains the liquid while still hot and reduces it to sugar by further boiling upon the kitchen stove. He and the other children repeat this process until they have from three hundred to five hundred pounds of sugar. His father permits him to sell some of it and to keep the proceeds for his own use. He soon learns that he can get better prices for it by being first in the local market in the village. There from house to house he peddles his sugar and collects shining dimes and quarters which he spends for the books his father cannot afford to buy.

Another scene discovers him making his first crude attempts at drawing. A visitor in the house exclaims, "What taste that boy has!" John pricks up his ears. "Then there is a kind of taste beside that of things to eat?" he queries. He likes words and becomes as curious about their shades of meaning as about the colors of a bird's wing or the notes of an animal's call. Yet, as a boy, he avoids writing school compositions whenever he can. One day he palms off on his teacher some lines written by a schoolmate—Jay Gould, the future financier. Even more amazing, we behold him on another occasion lending money to the impecunious young Gould.

As he progresses in his school work, we find him spending more and more time with the books of its tiny library—a work on Arabia, another on Murphy

MEN OF POWER

(a famous old Indian-killer), and especially a life of Washington, which he reads again and again. Sometimes of an evening the house is too noisy for reading, for father Burroughs and his Methodist neighbor are shouting proof-texts at each other in the kitchen.

The last of these boyhood scenes presents him as a lad of fifteen receiving from his father a promise that in the fall he will be permitted to go to Harpersfield Seminary, an academy. Neighboring boys have studied there and have come home with stories that fill John with hope and ambition that he, too, may some day enroll in its classes. His mother, as usual, has been the one to persuade the father to consent. All that summer the lad goes about the farm work, his head in the clouds, dreaming of those academy days to come. Harpersfield is the lure at the end of every furrow.

Yet at the end of the summer his dreams were shattered. His father reconsidered his promise, finding himself too poor to send the boy to Harpersfield. Long afterward, when the years had mellowed the pain of disappointment, John wrote in his journal that he probably got more out of his yearning to go than he would have acquired by actual attendance. His mind had been awakened, his ambitions kindled through those months of summer work. "The aspiration for knowledge opens the doors of the mind and makes ready for her coming." His father's refusal was only a hurdle. He would not let it bar his pursuit of knowledge.

JOHN BURROUGHS

He Leaves Home. Now came the most decisive step of his early life. After spending the winter of his seventeenth year back in the rural school, instead of in Harpersfield Seminary, he resolved to strike out for himself, to be forever through with coaxing for text-books, and to earn his own money and educate himself. There was no family quarrel; it was simply time for the fledgling to leave the nest. His older brothers had doubtless felt the same way but had never quite had the courage to make the break. Hiram—the one most like John—had kept his valise packed for years, and had once actually left the old farm, but after tramping a few miles had turned back home again and had never afterward mustered the resolution to go, although he continued to keep the valise packed in readiness. John determined to be different. So one morning in early April, his oilcloth satchel in his hand, seven dollars in his pocket, and foreboding in his heart, he set out in the midst of a snow squall to walk eight miles over the mountains to the turnpike. There he took the stage-coach for the neighboring county of Ulster, where he hoped to find a position as teacher of some elementary school.

After several days riding around the country with a rural doctor he located a little school at Tongore whose trustees were willing to engage him if he would take the job at ten dollars for the first month and eleven dollars thereafter and “board around.” He took it and managed to save fifty dollars out of his six months’ sal-

MEN OF POWER

ary. With that fifty dollars he paid his tuition the following winter at Hedding Literary Institute at Ashland, New York. A small sum, perhaps, but it symbolized his capacity to make his own way and to provide a surplus for his further education. He had tried his wings and found them strong enough to bear him into the world beyond the mountains.

Struggling for an Education. The next six years he devoted to strengthening those wings. He taught rural schools in New York, Illinois, and New Jersey. He studied for a few months in Cooperstown Seminary. Summers he returned to Roxbury to help his father on the farm. Hard years; but probably no harder than hundreds of other ambitious farm youths experienced in those days. What distinguished John was the way he spent his hard-earned dollars and used his leisure time. He seldom earned more than twenty-two dollars a month, but he spent most of it for books. At the beginning of each summer he would arrive at the old farm with empty pockets, but his satchel bulging with new and second-hand books. Emerson, Wordsworth, Carlyle, Johnson, Locke, Plato, Bacon, Pope, and Channing—such were the minds he selected to develop his own. Of Emerson he wrote, "I read him in a sort of ecstasy. I got him in my blood, and he colored my whole intellectual outlook." At first it was Emerson's boldness and unconventionality that appealed to him, but later it was the deep spiritual insight of the Sage of Concord which got hold of him. He counted Emerson

JOHN BURROUGHS

his "spiritual father in the strictest sense" and held that his words were the "sunlight to my pale and tender genius."

He revered Emerson, but found Wordsworth a more human companion. The poet of the English lakes had been reared among scenes not unlike his own Catskill country and had been impressed with a "sense of the mystery of things" that he must try to fathom. Wordsworth, more than any other English poet, made articulate in lyric lines of beauty the impulses that Burroughs found stirring within himself when close to the heart of nature. As for Carlyle, although he neither revered nor loved him, he took unbounded delight in the Scotch prophet's bludgeoning of the moral shams of mankind. On the other hand, Johnson intrigued him by his mastery of words, and Burroughs spent many an evening trying to write essays in the Johnsonian style. These authors became as real to him as the farmers among whom he "boarded 'round," and infinitely more appealing. The latter were of the earth, earthy; the former were of the immortals in whose company he aspired to dwell.

He Marries—and Continues to Struggle. At twenty he married Ursula North, a young woman he had met while teaching at Tongore. Orderly and thrifty in habit, forceful in manner, she supplied traits he lacked; yet the two never lived in the same world. She was self-complacent; he, self-critical. She cared nothing for literature; he hungered for it. When, shortly after

their marriage, he confided that he had determined to become a writer, she gave him no encouragement. He tried to make her see the world as he saw it. "Open your heart to the good and the beautiful in nature and in life," he wrote in a letter to her, "and my soul will go out to yours as naturally as the magnet turns to the Pole." But the words were only words to her—and nothing more. She regarded him as a promising but dreamy young man who would eventually come to his senses and settle down. Meanwhile, she was quite willing to endure his poverty with him. For two years after their marriage they could not afford to set up housekeeping, and part of their maladjustment was probably due to their frequent separations in this period. Then a school at East Orange, New Jersey, offered him a position at a better salary; and they established their home. She was a good housewife and an implacable enemy of dirt and unnecessary expense, but she was no homemaker. Her health was frail, and her spirit seldom, if ever, walked with his; in fact they diverged until in middle life they were poles apart. He developed; she simply hardened.

He Begins to Write. Meanwhile, he continued his attempts to write. Beginning, as we have seen, with imitation of the formal and complex style of Johnson, he soon forsook it for the more simple and direct style of Emerson. At twenty-three he sent an essay entitled "Expression" to the *Atlantic*. The editor, James Russell Lowell, liked it, but found it so Emersonian in

JOHN BURROUGHS

thought and expression that he felt sure it must have been plagiarized. However, he searched Emerson's works in vain for its source, and, when he had convinced himself that it was original, published it as an unsigned contribution. It was reprinted later in an anthology of essays, and the compiler attributed it to Emerson. But these failures to receive due credit could not rob Burroughs entirely of his triumph. He had "broken into" the *Atlantic* and had won the left-handed compliment of writing too much like his literary divinity. The significance of the essay today lies in the fact that it anticipated by half a century Bergson's theory that there is in man an *élan vital* that is responsible for his creative evolution.

Encouraged by this success, Burroughs followed it with a series of semi-philosophical articles in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*. In these, under the title "Analogy," he clearly indicated his acceptance of the thesis of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, which had been published only three years earlier and was still being loudly damned in press and pulpit.

His wings grew stronger. As they carried him into new regions of thought he discovered authors he had not known. In his twenty-fourth year he came across Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. He plumed himself, as he afterward wrote, that he did not have to wait for some critic to tell him that it was great. He knew it as soon as he read it. He picked out what he could understand and let the rest go until his own experience could

MEN OF POWER

interpret. The following year, while still teaching, he "read medicine" for some months in the office of a country doctor in Olive, New York. Gloomy and depressed over what seemed to him his slow progress, he tried one evening to express in verse the faith toward which he was groping. The result: the poem "Waiting."

Serene, I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind, or tide, or sea;
I rave no more 'gainst Time or Fate,
For, lo! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

Asleep, awake, by night or day,
The friends I seek are seeking me;
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Nor change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap where it hath sown,
And garner up its fruit of tears.

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The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave unto the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.

JOHN BURROUGHS

These lines, first published in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, made but little impression until they caught the keen eye of John Greenleaf Whittier, who put the poem into an anthology, *Songs of Three Centuries*. After that it was taken up and reprinted in dozens of journals. Since it embodies in simple form the common aspirations of anxious and troubled souls everywhere, they took it to their hearts, committed it to memory, and steadied their own faith with it in days of stress. To-day it is probably more widely known and cherished than any other of Burroughs' writings.

The following year he taught at Highland Falls, New York, and continued to read medical books. But medicine did not appeal to him; and as he discovered a fine general library at near-by West Point, he gave up the medical books and plunged again into essays and poetry. One day he came across Audubon's book on birds. As he said afterward, "It was like bringing together fire and powder." He fairly exploded with joy. He, too, knew birds, but not so well as Audubon knew them. Audubon opened for him an understanding and appreciation of a world on whose threshold he had lived not knowing the riches within. For days his revived interest was so keen he could think and talk of nothing but birds. In later years Burroughs was to be affectionately known as "John o'Birds." He dated his birth in that rôle at the hour when he opened Audubon's book.

However, his own inner turmoil and discontent in-

MEN OF POWER

creased. The Civil War was raging, and he wanted to enlist. But his wife was ill, and she strongly opposed his going into the army. Throughout the winter he nursed her and continued teaching. In late October, 1863, harassed by poverty and his own indecision concerning his future, he took another bold step. He went to the trustees of the school and asked for a raise in salary. They refused him, and he promptly resigned. Thereupon he set out for Washington, hoping, by being closer to the scene of military operations, that he could get into the army at once. He had another reason for choosing Washington: Walt Whitman was there, and a mutual friend had told him that Whitman had read Burroughs' writings and would be glad to meet the young author. This desire to meet Whitman was probably more vital than his patriotic urge to join the army.

In Government Employ. Arriving in Washington, he soon got such a realistic and tragic picture of soldier life that his fervor for the army cooled. He saw trainloads of soldiers herded like cattle in box cars and shipped to the front. He saw other trainloads of the wounded, maimed, and broken, returning from the battle-fronts. The romance of war vanished for him, and his enthusiasm for military life wilted. He had thought of soldiering as something like a hunting adventure. He now saw it in its grisly reality—and decided to look around for a different sort of employment of his talents.

JOHN BURROUGHS

He found it in the Treasury Building, where he was put in charge of an iron vault. His wife soon joined him, and they rented a house and an acre of ground within a mile of the Treasury, made a garden, and kept cows and chickens. The government promoted him in a few years to chief of the Organization Division of National Banks and advanced his salary from \$1,200 to \$2,100. He and his wife then moved into a brick house in the suburbs. For ten years he held this position.

Friendship with Whitman. They were happy years, not because of the work, which was drudgery, but because of his friendship with Walt Whitman. It probably had more influence upon him than any other factor of his adult life. In comradeship with Whitman, Burroughs found himself. His inner turmoil subsided, and tranquillity took possession of his spirit. He "raved no more 'gainst Time and Fate—his own had come to him."

Since this man meant so much to him and became the subject of his first book, it may not be amiss to dwell for a moment upon the relations of the two. Whitman was forty-four, Burroughs twenty-six, when they first met. Emerson had described Whitman as "half song thrush and half alligator," and Burroughs was therefore surprised to find him a well-dressed, benevolent-looking gentleman, clean and neat, with none of the aspect of an alligator. He had, to be sure, a shaggy beard; but this was a common appendage in those times. His voice

MEN OF POWER

was rich and mellow, and his manners those of a gentle, cultivated, and sympathetic soul. The more Burroughs saw of him the better he liked him; and gradually he came to the conviction that Whitman was a new type of gentleman, a new type of philosopher—a veritable new ethics walking around on two legs. He loved him as a friend and the noblest person he had ever known. The two were companionable without talking. Burroughs said that Whitman taught him “generosity, breadth, and an all-embracing charity.”

Whitman at the time was a correspondent for the *New York Times* and lived in a “sort of attic room in a boardinghouse.” What money he saved from his salary he contributed to destitute soldiers. Burroughs liked his carefree, easy life. The two met almost daily, sometimes over a mug of ale or a peck of oysters, sometimes to attend a scientific lecture, and sometimes just to stroll together in the woods or along the streets. Often they could be seen riding the front end of a horse-car with their mutual friend Peter Doyle, the driver.

In the summertime they went together into the fields and along the streams. Burroughs here was the more active and inquiring, examining minutely flowers, rocks, birds, and butterflies; Whitman, the older, was more contemplative and leisurely and more desirous of putting himself *en rapport* with the spirit of the whole scene. Yet when Burroughs brought new bits of information from his observation Whitman was quick and discriminating in his appreciation. They were young

JOHN BURROUGHS

scientist and older poet in perfect harmony with each other.

Dr. Clara Barrus, whose truly Boswellian biography of Burroughs is the ultimate source of nearly all the existing sketches of his life, says that it is impossible to exaggerate Whitman's influence upon Burroughs. She compares it in its formative power to the friendship of Coleridge for Wordsworth and of Carlyle for Emerson.

His First Books After three years of this comradeship Burroughs published his first book, *Notes on Walt Whitman, Poet and Person*. It was a brief book—an apologia for his friend at whose head conventionally sanctimonious folk had been hurling their vituperations. Burroughs tried to make the public see him in a truer light—as “the most uncompromising spiritualist in literature,” that is, one for whom “all things exist by and for the soul.” He portrayed Whitman as the poet, but even more as the prophet, of democracy. As such Burroughs believed his friend belonged among the redeemers and saviors of mankind. Whitman's gospel was essentially the gospel of love and not entirely new; but his manner of living it in daily association with the publicans and sinners of nineteenth-century America—giving himself humbly in countless acts of quiet helpfulness—seemed to Burroughs a reincarnation of the Man of Galilee.

Writing this book, together with his long conversations with Whitman, brought Burroughs to maturity

MEN OF POWER

in his own inner life. He knew now along what lines lay his own future in literature. He would be an interpreter of nature. Until he went to Washington his essays had been largely philosophical. A few had been accepted; more had been rejected. From now on they would deal primarily with nature. The editorial acceptances increased. His work at the Treasury Building usually permitted him several hours each day at his desk beside the vault—hours in which he was free to write. He employed them in describing birds and animals and their life in woods and fields. These essays began to flow from his pen in an uninterrupted stream and, appearing in various magazines, made his name known to an ever-widening circle of readers.

At thirty-four he published his second book, *Wake-Robin*, which, though named after a flower (the nodding trillium) dealt mostly with birds. Heretofore practically all books about birds—except Audubon's—had been ornithological. They were good guides for taxidermists. But this one was different; it retained scientific accuracy, but it also sang. Reviewers in England as well as in America hailed it gratefully. They found its chapters held together with a thread of song. One of them pronounced it “an exhibition of live birds on the wing, and in the nest; birds in love, and birds in song; birds at work, and birds at play.” His reputation was made; his wings were mature; he began to soar.

To Europe—and Back to the Soil. In the same year, 1871, he went to England and the Continent on routine

JOHN BURROUGHS

business for the Treasury Department. There he met Carlyle, Edward Dowden, and other literary men, saw real works of art and architecture for the first time in his life, and spent many hours walking over the English downs listening to the songs of the larks. Returning to America stimulated by these Old World contacts, he felt himself atingle to achieve a quality in what he wrote that would make him worthy of the fellowship of Carlyle and Dowden, Whitman and Emerson.

After another year in the Treasury he became convinced that he could not do this sort of writing about nature while he sat beside a vault from morning until night, with only the early and late hours of each day reserved for observation. He must get back to the country. So he resigned his post, bought a few acres of land along the Hudson about eighty miles north of New York, and began building a new home, which he called "Riverby." To support himself and his wife he worked as receiver for a broken bank and intermittently as special bank examiner for the Treasury Department. The demands of this work were not heavy upon his time, so that he could devote much of each week to fruit-farming and writing.

Keeping Steadily at It for Fifty Years. From this time until his death in 1921 he published one book about every two years, including *Winter Sunshine*, *Birds and Poets*, *Locusts and Wild Honey*, *Signs and Seasons*, *Whitman: a Study*, *The Light of Day*, *Life of Audubon*, *Leaf and Tendril*, *The Summit of the Years*, and

MEN OF POWER

Accepting the Universe. He contributed more than sixty essays to the *Atlantic*. His simple, homely, and essentially poetic descriptions of the common objects and experiences of rural life touched responsive chords in the hearts of his readers.

One brief extract from these writings must suffice us here. Some violence is done in cutting it from its context, but it may still convey the flavor of the whole. It is from the essay *Sharp Eyes*.

I was much amused one summer day in seeing a bluebird feeding her young one in the shaded street of a large town. She had captured a cicada or harvest-fly, and after bruising it a while on the ground flew with it to a tree and placed it in the beak of the young bird. It was a large morsel, and the mother seemed to have doubts of her chick's ability to dispose of it, for she stood near and watched its efforts with great solicitude. The young bird struggled valiantly with the cicada, but made no headway in swallowing it, when the mother took it from him and flew to the sidewalk, and proceeded to break and bruise it more thoroughly. Then she again placed it in his beak, and seemed to say, "There, try it now," and sympathized so thoroughly with his efforts that she repeated many of his motions and contortions. But the great fly was unyielding, and, indeed, seemed ridiculously disproportioned to the beak that held it. The young bird fluttered and fluttered and screamed, "I'm stuck, I'm stuck," till the anxious parent again seized the morsel and carried it to an iron railing, where she came down upon it for the space of a minute with all the force and momentum her beak could com-

JOHN BURROUGHS

mand. Then she offered it to her young a third time, but with the same result as before, except that this time the birds dropped it; but she was at the ground as soon as the cicada was, and taking it in her beak flew some distance to a high board fence where she sat motionless for some moments. While pondering the problem how that fly should be broken, the male bluebird approached her, and said very plainly, and I thought rather curtly, "Give me that bug," but she quickly resented his interference and flew farther away, where she sat apparently quite discouraged when I last saw her.²

From every part of the United States people wrote letters to him—letters about *their* observations of birds, flowers, and animals. They asked him questions, sent him specimens for identification, and begged him to interpret their experiences. At last he had a public, one that knew him and looked up to him and wanted so to read what he had to say that they bought his books by the thousands. By the time he was sixty his name had become a household word, and he was one of the most popular authors of his day. He gave up bank-examining entirely and lived upon the income from his fruit farm and the royalties from his writings.

Slabsides. The people who came to see him—farmers, city folk, college students, literary men and women, and lovers of nature generally—became so numerous that a new strain developed in his home. Mrs. Burroughs found that these pilgrims interfered with her

² By permission of Houghton Mifflin Co., authorized publishers.

MEN OF POWER

meticulous housekeeping. She looked upon his writings as a kind of self-indulgence; she wanted neither his books nor his friends about her immaculate house. To relieve the strain Burroughs built for himself and his visitors a cottage about a mile above the main house and on the edge of a swamp. He called it "Slabsides." Constructed by his own hands from foundation to roof, it expressed the man himself—rugged, unpretentious, and honest.

Here in a miniature wilderness he lived like an old-time philosopher, an Abelard or a Plato. He made his own furniture, raised his own potatoes, beans, celery, and fruit, caught fish in the near-by stream and cooked his own meals. He spent much of his time out of doors, working upon his acres or rambling through the woods. When the weather was inclement he stayed indoors and read, meditated, and wrote. His simple manner of living drew even more pilgrims to Slabsides than he had had in the larger house. They came singly and in couples, sometimes in clubs and schools. Anyone who could say he had spent a day with Burroughs at Slabsides was sure of an eager audience back home.

Occasionally—partly to escape the never-ending caravans of pilgrims and partly to lift the horizons of his own mind—he traveled. He went again to Europe, and later to Alaska, Jamaica, California, and Hawaii. He tramped through Yellowstone Park with President Theodore Roosevelt, through the Yosemite with John Muir, over Cuba with Henry Ford, and about Florida

JOHN BURROUGHS

with Thomas Edison. His journals are rich with reminiscences of these men and their walks and talks.

In the summers he continued to go back to the scenes of his youth near Roxbury. There he built another retreat which he called "Woodchuck Lodge." "Retreat" is hardly an accurate word. At least he had no seclusion, for here, too, the visitors flocked. There was something in the aging naturalist with gray hair, scraggly beard, kindly, weather-beaten face, which drew them. He seemed to stand for something as timeless as the hills. He had not bowed his knee to the gods of machinery and speed. In him they found understanding and wisdom.

What the Pilgrims Found in Burroughs. It was more than a love of nature that the pilgrims found in this friendly, vigorous, and perpetually curious seer. Out of his love of nature had come a deep sense of kinship with all life. From the birds of the air and the lilies of the field he had learned what was essential and what was unessential to the art of living. Basic in that art was the principle that man must adjust himself to the universe and not try to adjust the universe to himself. He believed that this is a good world, that the men and women in it are good in so far as they live in harmony with nature, and that life is altogether worth living. Theology he had none. But he had a set of values, taught him at Mother Nature's knee, and by these values he guided his daily choices. Honesty, sincerity, humility, simplicity, and kindness—by such

MEN OF POWER

standards he chose his friends, his books, his work, and his recreations. He loved his fellow men. He cared as little for money and things and ostentation as Francis of Assisi. Unlike Francis, however, he had no great mystical experience and founded no brotherhood. Had he lived in Francis' day he might happily have joined the Brothers Minor, but he would not have become their leader. He had neither taste nor talent for leadership. He was "shy as a song-sparrow." But, like the sparrow, he had a song that drew the pilgrims to his rural retreats. There was something elemental about it, something infinitely sweet and reassuring that awoke almost forgotten melodies in their own hearts. Men and women who had been battered and bruised in the noisy scramble of American cities heard in Burroughs a call to the simple life. Here was a man who had kept his soul. They would seek him out.

His Philosophy of Life. They would raise the age-old questions about the goals and meaning of life. He answered them in everyday language, direct and non-theological. He had a profound reverence for righteousness, but none for dogma. The orthodox often said he had given his heart to nature instead of God, but he could not see the difference. He had little patience with people who, as Matthew Arnold said, "spoke of God as if he lived around the corner where they interviewed him daily." The God he believed in was the "omnipotent intelligence underlying the manifestation of power and orderliness that we see in the universe." Like

JOHN BURROUGHS

Emerson he thought he recognized this same intelligence working in the human conscience as well as in nature. The truly religious man for him was the one who adjusted his life to the order of the universe and who obeyed the voice of conscience within. He made no pretence of knowing the origin or ultimate destiny of man; but he had a deep-seated conviction that those who sought truth and beauty, justice and righteousness need not worry. They would have a better chance of survival in the unending struggle of nature than those who sought only selfish ends. He urged the young men and women who brought their religious questions to him to forget their metaphysical speculations and to look about them and find heaven in their own vicinity. "The grand and beautiful are there if you have eyes for them."

He was branded as an atheist and an infidel by many of the "unco guid." A liberal minister once wrote him of his own sympathy with Burroughs' ideas, asserting that they were in harmony with the more humanitarian religions of the future. He added, "I cannot say it just that way to the world, but I can say it to you." Burroughs differed from all such timid souls by saying to the world exactly and forcefully what he believed and why.

In a day when men everywhere defined success in terms of money and power he sounded a deeper note. He had had to think out his position on this subject, first in conflict with his father and later in conflict with

MEN OF POWER

his wife. The latter wanted him to "succeed"; but to her that meant respectability, orthodoxy, good salary, substantial home, property, and the praise of men. He had learned to care little or nothing for this kind of success. "I see clearly," he once wrote her, "that the only kind of success worth having is inward, virtual, unseen; the gaining of wisdom, the understanding of this universe; the seeing of beauty and meaning in everything God has made—the success of Socrates who owned nothing, had no business or profession, and was at last poisoned by his countrymen. This is the only success—in one's soul—and not in his purse or title-deeds."

His Limitations. How much of his domestic difficulties were due to Mrs. Burroughs and how much to his own brusque and uncouth ways it is not for us to say. Doubtless there was fault on both sides. His admirers—and they were legion—found no fault in him. But no one, reading his essays in the perspective of the decades since his passing, can be unaware that he had distinct limitations when he ventured, as he often did, into the field of formal philosophy. Here, though he continued in a way the tradition of Carlyle, Emerson, and Whitman, whom he admired, he displayed an inferior quality of insight and power of expression. His enthusiasm overran his judgment. After reading Darwin and Fiske and other scientists, for example, he became convinced that what the poets and philosophers had written about nature was no longer essential.

JOHN BURROUGHS

Henceforth the world belonged to the scientists. (Yet he himself never adopted either the laboratory or field experimental methods of science.) He left off reading the poets and at forty-six wrote in *The Light of Day* that reason was the true light, science the true savior of mankind. At that time he foresaw the end of all religion and of most literature. However, by the time he reached fifty-eight this overenthusiastic faith in science had begun to wane. Perhaps, he admitted, the poets and prophets might still be needed. When the Great War broke he had still further to revise his adoration of science. While still appreciative of the results of science, he saw it as an engine running without headlights and racing toward man's destruction. The gods of science seemed to be with the German military machine, and all those human values he held most dear—"our heritage from Greece, India, and the meditative Orient"—seemed imperiled. He became so violent in his hatred of Germany that the aphorism "hell hath no fury like a non-combatant" might have been applied to him. In his last four books, however, he returned to a mellower outlook, recognizing the need of poets and prophets as well as scientists to guide mankind toward an understanding of the universe.

The Sources of His Power. In spite of these limitations he was one of the most outstanding men of his generation. During the last forty years of his life, according to the *Dictionary of American Biography*, he "probably had a greater personal following than

MEN OF POWER

any other American author." From near and far pilgrimages were made to his "Slabsides" and "Woodchuck Lodge" to see, as Norman Foerster called him, "the wise man who, in the time of decaying creeds, expounded a way of life that could free men from Mammon, frivolity, and insincerity, and render them content to accept the universe with all its beauty, wonder, and apparent evil." Living that way of life constituted a major source of his power.

But it did not come to him full-blown from some mystic origin. Its roots struck deep into his ancestry of English, Welsh, and American pioneer farmers. He had cultivated it and strengthened it through nearly half a century of struggle. His ugly duckling status in his own family had driven him to find in nature the companionship denied him by his own kin. There his natural curiosity had grown keener as he studied the habits of birds and animals. His early familiarity with the few books available in the little stone schoolhouse; his leaving home at seventeen to retain his self-respect by earning his own money for more books; his fortunate choice of his first authors, Johnson, Emerson, Carlyle, Wordsworth; his brave attempt to imitate their style in writing; his perseverance through ten years of poverty as he taught rural schools—all these toughened his fibre, broadened his sympathies, and gave strength to his growing wings. Then the discovery of Audubon, the renewed interest in birds, the happy comradeship with Whitman, the travels

JOHN BURROUGHS

abroad, and the stimulus of Carlyle, Dowden, and other writers brought his developing ambition to maturity.

But ambition is not power; at best it is only the dynamic that keeps a man at his work. His power came when he had disciplined his spirit to understand, and his home-made pen to write, the message he heard for human life in the heart of nature. That message, which he was continually hearing in the songs of the birds, the rustling of the leaves, and the murmur of the brooks, he put into his essays. In *The Light of Day* he wrote its essence:

You have only to enlarge your vision and exalt your faith enough, when all things become divine and beautiful; you have only to keep your humanity to its proper pitch, when all men and women become your brothers and sisters.

Such words, from the great-hearted man who had proven them in his own life, set bells ringing in the inner temples of men and women who had forgotten their kinship with each other and their common mother.



GRAHAM TAYLOR¹

1851-1938

"TO GRAHAM TAYLOR: Good Neighbor, Unflinching Citizen, Social Scientist, Pioneer on Social Frontiers"—with these words a jury of twenty-five leading citizens of Chicago presented to an eighty-six-year-old social scientist the highest honor in their power to bestow, the Merit Award. The award, initiated and sponsored by the Chicago Rotary Club, is made but once in three years. The greatest care is exercised to make sure that the person to receive the honor is unmistakably the right one. To this end the club appoints an independent jury composed of the presi-

¹I wish to acknowledge gratefully the assistance of members of Graham Taylor's family in providing some of the materials for this sketch and for helpful suggestions toward its revision. I am particularly indebted to his daughters Lea and Katharine, his son Dr. Graham R., and his brothers Drs. Livingston L. and William R. Taylor.—F. E.

GRAHAM TAYLOR

dents of fifteen Chicago organizations and ten other distinguished citizens. When, after due deliberation, the jury announced its decision that the award for 1937 should go to Dr. Graham Taylor, a special meeting was called; and the aging man, brought to it in a wheel chair, was presented with a parchment on which this tribute was engrossed:

To Chicago, growing and changing, The Chicago Theological Seminary called you in 1892 from a professorship in The Hartford Theological Seminary to offer the first department dealing with social conditions and relations in the curriculum of any church institution.

Determined to understand and fairly to interpret these conditions, and your fellow-citizens involved in them, you made it a condition of the acceptance of the call that you establish your family residence in a great cosmopolitan community.

Therefore, in 1894, you selected the stranded old house on Union Street near the end of Milwaukee Avenue for your family residence and the larger resident household. There you lived until 1901, when the Chicago Commons building at Grand Avenue and Morgan Street was ready for occupancy and operation.

Since 1901 Chicago Commons has been an educational, social, and civic center not only for your household group and neighbors but for hundreds of students in institutions of higher learning, for many citizens in different walks of life, and for different nationalities and sects. . . .

Through the forty-three years that have ensued since 1894 you have made your home quietly in one of

MEN OF POWER

Chicago's most congested areas, a soft-spoken but forthright, unpresuming, and scholarly citizen. Today you are valiantly advancing into your eighty-seventh year. Never once in almost half a century have you claimed credit for anything you have done. Never once have you withheld the most knightly acknowledgment of the leadership of others. Yet it is no more than a true epitome of your life among us to acknowledge that for all who have worked at your side, in any of a thousand labors for the welfare of humanity, you have become the personification of enlightened leadership and human sympathy in intelligent, everyday, productive service.

It was your dream that there, in a humble neighborhood, you might keep the teaching of social economics true and sound by virtue of the human touch. In this your family have gone hand in hand. They are now following the noble example of living Christianity which you have personified.

Perceiving the peril of driving men to discuss their grievances in secret, you made Chicago Commons a "free floor" for the airing of the views of plain men on the problems of men of every station. Cautiously, hopefully, bravely, like a Minute Man on the ramparts of social service, you went forth from university and social settlement to carry the fight for clean municipal government, for individual responsibility among the more highly privileged of the city, for the redemption of Chicago from its old alliance with commercialized vice. Wherever men were inclined to accept defeat as inevitable, your tall and stalwart figure stood unyielding, a very rock of steadfastness for democracy in action.

Your course at The Chicago Theological Seminary

GRAHAM TAYLOR

shortly revealed itself as the norm out of which grew a magnificent new movement in education. Your lectures expanded into the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy which, in turn, grew into the Graduate School of Social Service Administration of the University of Chicago. Writing, lecturing, teaching, testing, you opened wide the door for hundreds of social workers to organize the teachings of experience that the poor might be helped, not in their poverty but out of it.

With fellow-workers at Chicago Commons you founded a magazine, *The Commons*, devoted to the systematizing of study into a program of action designed to ameliorate human suffering. A similar magazine appeared in New York, *Charities*. It is significant of generous editorial attitudes in both centers that the two were merged to flower into the excellent *Survey* of our later time.

Charity, in the Graham Taylor philosophy, was the true forerunner of justice. Did men need help? Then help them first of all. But let the help not stop with relief, let it reach out to the roots of the matter; and those roots, as you came to see more and more clearly, were deep in the minds and souls of men. Unless men could be lifted or stirred, inspired or aroused to see and aspire to better things, to help themselves, little of permanent value could be achieved. Your motto came to be "Manward to God and Godward to Man."

A long range was given to your great service by the opening, to you, of an editorial column in the *Chicago Daily News* from week to week. What you were learning from the poor, what you garnered from your battling and battering, what your mind and soul pondered, from one experience to another, you worked

MEN OF POWER

into persuasive, plain-spoken messages to the mass of Chicago readers. Through twenty-eight years² you and this newspaper have joined in that signal labor for the guidance of the common voter; no man who has followed the series through campaign after campaign will question their enormous social effect.

Thus, as one who walked with the lowly in their service, as teacher of others who would serve likewise, as social scientist putting order into a new mass of material, as a citizen unabashed and undiscouraged, as a prophet of the philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth, into whose priesthood you had been ordained in your youth, you have let light into the myriad efforts of your fellows to better the lot of the unfortunate and make clean the body of the city.

In your own life you have proved your philosophy, your science, your Christian faith. In your citizenship you have become the exemplar of younger men and women who would be like you in daring not to compromise with injustice. In your fighting forward, year after year, you have helped others to see as you see that advancing age may mean no contracting of a man's zeal for humanity but rather yield unto him a steadily widening horizon of opportunity.

In thus acknowledging your leadership we, neighbors in Chicago, dedicate ourselves to cherish your teaching, to honor your service, and to emulate your example. We gather today in behalf of Chicago's citizenry and its representative agencies, to call attention to you as a great servant and leader of humanity, a pioneer on the social frontiers of this nation. We pay tribute to you as one beloved of all men and present to you "The

² This is in error; it should read, "thirty-five years."—F. E.

GRAHAM TAYLOR

Chicago Merit Local Award of 1937," for your long and distinguished service.

From his wheel chair, with eyes misty but voice vibrant, Graham Taylor responded:

I came to Chicago in the early nineties from the East. There such men as John Graham Brooks of Harvard, Washington Gladden of Ohio, and such a woman as Jane Addams of Chicago, were like voices crying in the wilderness—the unheeding wilderness—for more consideration, more comradeship between the classes of American society.

I was startled when I first came here to see what a class spirit there was, not only among the radicals but among some of the reactionary business men whom I met in certain of the clubs. But here was a little group of men who were whispering to each other: "Why can't we become united in the fellowship of good will instead of being merely competitors with each other?" You took a larger view of business, of industry, and of agriculture, and you incorporated it into your citizenship.

I do not think you knew how much you were doing. Some of us were lonesome enough, working on the side lines, with very scant sympathy from people who thought one either had to be on one side or the other, which I refused to be. I wanted to be an unclassified social democrat, independent of all political organizations. . . .

And if there is such a thing possible, I am coming back to ask you how we are getting along in ten, fifteen, or twenty years. I do not see how I can help coming

MEN OF POWER

back, because I have lived here. I have loved it here. . . .

I bid you Godspeed. Spread, for God's sake, spread in this hate-spread world of ours the gospel of peace and good will.

Graham Taylor had accumulated no fortune and no great fame outside his specialized field. He had never held a political or ecclesiastical office. His years had been spent quietly, laboriously, sometimes dangerously, in one of the most congested districts of Chicago among poor people of many races, religions, and nationalities. Yet this jury of Chicago's leading business and professional men had singled him out to receive the highest honor in their power to grant. He had attained a quality of life which they counted more precious than wealth or fame or station. What was it, and how did he come by it? Let us inquire into its origins and development.

His Times. The story of his life is the story of the impact of a courageous young minister upon an American social frontier. The young minister was afire with certain deep-burning convictions about the sanctity of human life and the kingdom of God on earth. The social frontier into which he penetrated with these convictions was that created by the industrial revolution and its concomitant changes in the way men worked and lived. A factory with good working conditions and decent wages was the exception, not the rule. Strife ruled the relations between capital and

GRAHAM TAYLOR

labor. Labor was a commodity to be bought in the cheapest market. The laborer had many duties, few rights. Immigrants by the millions from Italy, Poland, Germany, and Russia had streamed into this "land of opportunity" only to discover that more often than not their "opportunity" was to provide cheap labor for rapidly expanding industries and to live in wretched tenements crowded with other immigrants. Big business increased in power and forced little business to obey its will. The trusts rode hard, and often robber barons were in the saddle. Every city presented a sharp contrast between the luxury of a few and the utter poverty and misery of many—between the gold coast and the slums. The upper classes seemed either ignorant of the life of the other nine-tenths or blind to the effect of that life upon the future of America and the world.³

Graham Taylor lived and labored on the Chicago section of this frontier, interpreting its struggles to the contestants who were too much engrossed in their own battles to see the meaning of the whole. During his lifetime and with his help the underprivileged and overworked began to gather their strength and to demand the right to a better life.

Ancestry. Yet no prophet could have foretold at Taylor's birth that he would play such a rôle. All the omens pointed to his becoming a conventional and con-

³ For other social issues at the time of his birth (1851), see the sketch of Lincoln, pages 52-57.

MEN OF POWER

servative minister in an old-fashioned church somewhere on the eastern seaboard. For he was of the fifth generation of a family of ministers of the Reformed (Dutch) Church. His paternal grandfather, Rev. Benjamin C. Taylor, of British descent, had served for forty-two years as pastor of the Bergen Reformed Church, located on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River opposite New York City. This grandfather had married into the Romeyn family, noted for the number of its members who became *domines* of the Dutch church. On his mother's side Graham Taylor's ancestors were farmers, Cowenhoven by name, the descendants of old Holland-Dutch immigrants who had settled in the eastern part of the country. This blend of ministerial and farmer stock may have been one reason why Graham Taylor not only kept his feet on the ground but kept them active there for nearly eighty-seven years.

Parents. He was born in Schenectady, New York, May 2, 1851; but soon thereafter the family moved to Philadelphia. His mother died when he was but a year old. Her health had broken under the double strain of keeping alive her puny child and nursing her husband back to health after a prolonged illness. His father, the Rev. William J. R. Taylor, later married Graham's mother's sister, who nourished the lad and his older brother as she did her own two boys. "I would never have known," wrote Graham Taylor in his maturity, "that she had not borne me had I not been told." The

GRAHAM TAYLOR

father, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, strong in faith and gentle in manner, was a wise and affectionate guide to the four boys of the combined household. One of them, William R. Taylor, described him as "a born gentleman, combining to a remarkable degree native dignity and courtesy with a gentle friendliness which made association with him always a delight. He was a man of refined taste and culture."

Early Home Life. Graham started life with a weak constitution. As an infant he was so delicate that he was carried around on a pillow, and it was doubtful if he would survive. His frail health kept him within doors in the Philadelphia home through much of every winter of his childhood.

An atmosphere of affectionate happiness pervaded the home. It was religious without being dour. Every day one period was set aside for family worship with responsive readings, Bible stories, and the singing of hymns. "Sunday afternoon was the gladdest time of the week," he wrote in later years, for the parents saved for it special treats of candy or fruits, new toys or picture books. It was a time of quiet merriment mingled with instruction. As evening drew on the family sang together, told stories, or listened as the father read aloud. "The sabbath was more of a holy day because it was so much of a home holiday. Religion was the more real because it was what we all shared at home, as we did everything else. . . . We

MEN OF POWER

were brought up never to know any time or act that was not as religious as any other." ⁴ Summers, Graham spent with his seven cousins and half a dozen other young relatives on the spacious grounds which surrounded the homesteads of their aunts and uncles on Bishop Hill at New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Boyhood Church and Sunday School. In contrast to the happiness of the home, the church of his father seemed stern and otherworldly. When Graham sat in the family pew, he faced his father robed in a black gown standing behind his marble pulpit. That pulpit seemed more a judgment bar than a mercy seat, the preachers of those days more like prosecutors than messengers of peace and good will. They did not let the congregation forget that life on earth was a long probation where any false step might prove fatal. The hymns of the church, to be sure, spoke of a "happy land," but it was "far, far away where saints in glory stand." They pictured a Holy City; but it was beyond the River of Death, and its immigration laws were highly exclusive. Even the children in the Sunday School were taught to sing:

I am but a stranger here
Heaven is my home
Earth is a desert drear
Heaven is my home.
I'm a pilgrim and I'm a stranger.
I can tarry, I can tarry but a night.

⁴ Graham Taylor, *Pioneering on Social Frontiers*, University of Chicago Press, 1930, pp. 340-41.

GRAHAM TAYLOR

Some rays of human kindness mitigated all this gloom, else the church would have had no attraction for a growing boy. Graham had a Sunday School teacher, John Van Nest, a carpenter, who made religion a thing of this life. He knew little of the Bible but much of Christianity as a way of daily living. He taught Graham and the other boys the difference between right and wrong and helped them to develop their power of choice. He left the imprint of his own humble and upright character upon them for life.

Looking back upon these childhood Sundays from the perspective of seventy years, Graham Taylor made a generous observation which has in it a significant insight.

While all these anachronisms and paradoxes contradict the whole modern psychology of child study and religious education, yet even such teaching of religion is to be credited with a distinctive educational value. What the higher education does for the few in creating the capacity to detach one's self from others and from one's immediate surroundings, religion does for the many in doing much more. It summons the single self before the one God. It faces the soul with time and eternity. It bears home to the conscience the sense of individual accountability. It leaves us alone to reckon with destiny. The experience of spiritual detachment thus begotten by religion, and the capacity for intellectual detachment created by higher education are essential to full-orbed consciousness of self, fellow-man, and God. Without it the individual is so closely identified with his immediate surroundings as to be

MEN OF POWER

unable to distinguish himself or anyone else from them. Only as one is thus intellectually or spiritually enabled to back away from self can one judge one's self. Only as one is capable of viewing his own times in the light of other ages, in contrast or comparison with the experiences of other generations, can contemporary movements be understood and their achievements estimated.⁵

Schools and Books. The strong impress of this cosmic and rugged type of religion that surrounded him in his youth stands in sharp contrast to the weak impression made upon him by the static variety of formal education he received. He attended a private school in his early adolescence, but in after years could remember little about it except his happy association with an Italian boy who became his playmate. Nor could he recall anything significant in his four years at Rutgers College, from which he was graduated at the age of nineteen. To be sure, in these school years he acquired a necessary background of general knowledge and mental discipline, but little that helped him understand or relate himself to his social environment. Chemistry was taught from textbooks and without a laboratory for the students; botany and geology without field exploration; and the practice and even the observation of citizenship were ignored. As for ethics, no one seemed to think it other than an individual matter.

Thus, while his home and church sought to adjust the growing boy to the universe and to instill in him certain

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

eternal values, his schools contributed little to this end. In that respect they were only typical of most American schools of the period. The past crowded out the present. His early books smacked somewhat of adventure, but more of piety—*The Peep of Day*, *Precept upon Precept* (one of these glorified the bears that ate up the children who called Elisha "baldhead"), *Reading Without Tears*, *Ministering Children*, and *The Shady Side* (the doleful story of the poverty-stricken home of a pastor). But as he grew older two books of a larger caliber began to shape his thinking: the *Bible*, with which he became thoroughly familiar and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, to which he afterward made many allusions.

The Influence of a Great Friend. While at Rutgers College in New Brunswick, Graham Taylor came under the influence of Dr. Chester D. Hartranft, pastor of the Second Reformed Church of that city. Dr. Hartranft was a learned and powerful preacher, but he was more than that; he was a human being with an energetic interest in both culture and athletics. He had a profound appreciation of music and a distinct skill in the leadership of a choral society which he personally conducted. Young people of town and gown rallied to this society, and Graham Taylor was among the most devoted of its members. Dr. Hartranft took the boy into his inner circle of friends and, seeing that he was frail in health, encouraged him to take up rowing and to join the boat crew which the good doctor had or-

MEN OF POWER

ganized. Dr. Hartranft himself pulled the stroke oar of the six-oared shell, and Graham the bow oar. Naturally the youth worshipped the friend who had so practically and effectively ministered to his body and soul.

Entering the Ministry. Little wonder, then, that a young man, descended from a long line of ministers and reared in such a home and inspired by the examples of his father and Dr. Hartranft, should choose the ministry for his own vocation. Strongest of these influences was undoubtedly that of his father; yet the older man never sought to determine the son's choice. The kindly wisdom, the broad sympathy, the deep-rooted culture, and the godly daily life of the parent spoke louder than any words of argument or appeal. It was a process of penetration. "My father," wrote Graham, "became my theology, and his life and love the trellis over which the vine of mine grew upward—above all doubts that come when knowledge vanishes away, above all fears that arise when prophecies fail."

Marriage and First Pastorate. At twenty-two, upon graduation from the Reformed Church Seminary at New Brunswick, he married Leah Demarest, daughter of his professor, the Reverend David D. Demarest. In the same year he was ordained and installed as minister of the little rural Dutch Reformed Church at Hopewell, Dutchess County, New York. He began his pastorate in the conventional fashion in which he had been trained, trying to expound the "plan of salvation" according to the tenets of his denomination—the mys-

GRAHAM TAYLOR

teries of "justification," "election," "sanctification," and "adoption"—to farmers and townsfolk who were troubled about landlordism, corrupt politics, and a score of other practical problems of daily life. The stage was thus set for a dramatic conflict between his doctrinaire theology and their human need.

As he went among his parishioners he soon discovered that they were divided into two classes, the relatively well-to-do who owned the land (some of them old families who had inherited their farms from ancestors who had originally settled the region and who had passed it down by the custom of primogeniture) and the tenant farmers. The latter lived, for the most part, in "wretchedly built, poorly equipped, and run-down tenant-houses, in which large families were so overcrowded as to imperil health and to leave too little space for modesty or even decency." The more the young minister saw of such conditions and the effect of them on the moral and spiritual life of the tenants the more he came to question the effectiveness of his doctrinal approach.

He received a jolt during the early months of his ministry when a plainspeaking farmer one day objected to the proposed installation of a young man as deacon in the church, "because," said the farmer, "he bought his father-in-law's election as county commissioner." When Graham Taylor asked the young man about this, he admitted that he had "handled the money."

MEN OF POWER

"But did you not know that it is against the law?" queried Taylor.

"Yes," the young man responded, "but they all do it."

Thereupon the minister reminded him of the inconsistency of such an act with the responsibilities of church membership. Indignantly the would-be deacon and all his influential family resigned from the church. (Several years later he and they returned, acknowledging the justice of the pastor's protest). Corruption in local politics was so taken for granted that a warden of the state prison, also a member of the Hopewell church, on one occasion stood at the door of the polling place paying out two-dollar bills to citizens who had voted "right." This warden, hearing of the case of the young man challenged by Graham Taylor for buying his father-in-law's election, expressed regret that the *domine* had "interfered with politics." He should stick to the gospel.

Another member, the mother of one of the well-to-do old families, felt it unsuitable that the young pastor should call upon every household in the community and admonished him to confine his attentions to those who paid his salary. He replied, "I presumed that I was minister of the whole parish and never imagined that I was only pastor of the subscription list."

Even within the walls of his church he found the economic problem intruding. The pews on the main floor, owned by the old families and held in "fee simple"

GRAHAM TAYLOR

as their hereditary farms and homesteads, were willed to the heirs of the estates. Some members had inherited two or more pews and privately rented the ones they did not occupy. Requests to contribute such rental money to the church budget were often declined. One man based his refusal on the ground that the pew "was the last piece of real estate he owned in Dutchess County." The only free seats in the church were in the gallery, and this became crowded as Graham Taylor's popularity as pastor and preacher increased. So he had the gallery enlarged and the seats there made the most attractive and comfortable in the building. This resulted often in giving the Sunday morning congregation a top-heavy appearance, for there were more people in the gallery than on the main floor. Only after years of patient diplomacy could he persuade many of the old members to abolish the pew-owning system and make room for their humbler neighbors in the community's only church.

Transformation of a Theologue. Faced by such problems he was driven to separate the wheat from the chaff in his own religious philosophy. He began to talk less and less about "justification," "sanctification," and "adoption," and more about neighborliness. He came to see that the real wheat of Christianity was its emphasis upon the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the sanctity of the individual, and the power of Christ-like living to transform human life. He strove to put this simple gospel into practice in his daily

MEN OF POWER

contacts with the community. He was a good neighbor himself to the poor and rich alike. He visited the sick, clothed the destitute, and fed the hungry. He tried to weld the people of his church into a brotherhood.

But he did not stop there. His parish included a hundred and twenty square miles. As he traveled by horse and buggy over this area, he found no less than eight distinct neighborhoods in which the people were "related to each other more than at church." These neighborhoods centered in each case around the district schoolhouse, where everyone was free to mingle in social, political, and recreational meetings. Graham Taylor organized an outpost of his work in each of these neighborhoods and sought to transform them into brotherhoods. With the consent and co-operation of the people, he conducted religious services for children, youth, and adults in each schoolhouse and linked these outpost fellowships with the central church at Hopewell. Gradually the effect of this common sense and neighborly approach to his parish problems became evident. Factionalism gave way to co-operation; old grudges dissolved in new friendships; religion sloughed off some of its outgrown forms and took on fresh meaning.

But we are concerned here not so much with his parish as with himself. After seven years of this work Graham Taylor had undergone an inner transformation. He was still a Christian minister, but no longer a doctrinaire young man preaching an academic and creedal type of religion. He had become a courageous

GRAHAM TAYLOR

and socially-minded leader who had found more of God in human hearts than in the creeds. He had not lost his belief in the necessity for the individual to obey and have fellowship with the God in his own soul, nor his conviction of the importance of Christian nurture in home and church. But he had gained an insight into the way in which individuals can be brought into right relations with God and each other. It was through daily living of the Good Samaritan neighborly life that sacrifices self in works of kindness and mercy.

In his own words,

By applying Christian ideals to a particular child, man, and woman, my emphasis began to spread from the soul to the self and its surroundings and antecedents. It was thus that the sphere of the church and its ministry, of Christianity and every religion, began to extend beyond the saving of the soul to the social salvation. . . . This rural experience marked the beginning of my transition from a sense of individual responsibility to a community or civic consciousness." ^o

Called to a Run-down City Church. Naturally, the success of his ministry in the rural parish came to the attention of larger churches looking for pastors. He had no wish to leave Hopewell; he had come to love his people, and they to love him. When, however, the Fourth Congregational Church of Hartford, Connecticut, challenged him to apply to a congested city parish the same forthgoing and neighborly methods he had

^o *Ibid*, pp. 348, 360

MEN OF POWER

worked out in the scattered rural field, he weighed the matter carefully, felt the pull of new adventure, and finally accepted. One factor in his acceptance was the fact that his old friend Dr. Hartranft was now in the New England city as president of The Hartford Theological Seminary. But Taylor left Hopewell only with a heart wrench, and for more than fifty years kept up a personal correspondence with some of the friends he had made there.

The Hartford church seated twelve hundred; but its attendance had dropped, by the shifts of urban population, to less than fifty. It was a church "with more of a history than a hope." Yet its tall spire dominated "a district covering one quarter of the city's area into which three-quarters of its poor and delinquent people were densely crowded." When the twenty-nine-year-old minister first faced the microscopic congregation in the big church, a junior deacon took one look at him and remarked to the senior deacon, "I guess the man couldn't come and sent his boy." But the "boy" soon proved himself a general worthy of the fine traditions of the historic old church, which in its younger days had been among the first to preach the abolition of slavery and to pioneer in such causes as the temperance movement and woman suffrage.

Finding that the people of the neighborhood did not come to the church, he promptly sought them out where they were. He conducted open-air services in the streets under the big elms, or on baseball grounds, where he

GRAHAM TAYLOR

soon had the bleachers almost as crowded as they were for ball games, or from the church porch, which fronted on a thoroughfare where throngs surged by in a never-ending stream. He visited the jails and the state prison and talked to men through cell bars. He went from house to house, office to office, and tenement to tenement, meeting men and women where they worked or lived, making friends with them just as he had done among the tenant farmers of Dutchess County. And the results were the same; the lonely and the poor, the outcast and troubled, responded. They began to come to his church to hear more of what he had to say. There they heard him advance ideas curiously new in those days—such ideas as this: "You can't save the souls of the children down in Charles Street without taking notice of the Charles Street muck in which they have to be born."

The church building, spacious though it was, afforded no suitable quarters where these newcomers could meet during the week for informal gatherings or for discussion or for the fellowship of games. So he built an addition to the structure—a simple neighborhood commons room with an open door upon the street level. Here he held evangelistic services on Sunday evenings. Here, too, he opened an office to which the friendless and the troubled came and talked out their difficulties with him.

The money to build this neighborly addition to the church came from three sources: from the saintly

MEN OF POWER

widow of Horace Bushnell, from a drinking man who had conquered the habit, and, chiefly, from a reformed gambler. The latter wrote to Graham Taylor:

I have determined not to go back into the old business, come what will. I trust that there will be an opening so that my wife and child will not starve. But I do long to associate with good and Christian men and women. I am starved for that association. If I could have it I believe I could soon be willing to leave all to God. You can hardly imagine the darkness, almost despair, that at times I have been in. For years I had no one to talk with, as I now do with you; and I have had to bear it all alone, without human help. Words cannot tell you how I long to be out from all low and wrong associations. They, none of them, have any pleasure for me, and I do not believe that I shall be compelled to have any more of them.⁷

The stories of broken and ruined men and women who found new hope and courage under Taylor's ministry in Hartford are legion. The following are typical.

One day a young man came timidly to his door and passed back and forth in front of it before he finally screwed up enough courage to enter. He told Taylor that in his fourteenth year he had been jailed for carrying a coil of rope which a thief had hired him to sell. The boy had no mother; and his father, not believing in his innocence, had driven him from home. He

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 364.

GRAHAM TAYLOR

had become a sneak thief, a burglar, a "drunken disorderly," and a convict. "Now," he said, "I am tired of myself." Taylor persuaded him that he was not without friends and that there was a God who cared for every individual, including convicts. He encouraged the young man to call upon him daily and to write to him during his absences from town. One such post card read in part, "I went to the mission last night. The leader said he would rather have one righteous man than fifty sinners. Then I thought that you would rather have fifty sinners than one righteous man." This man's record for thieving was so well known to the police that they had made a habit of locking him up whenever circuses and other crowd-drawing events came to town. Graham Taylor went to the police station and begged them to give the young man a chance to do right by leaving him in Taylor's care on the next circus day. It was the first such day the youth had been free for several years, and it helped to make a man of him. Eventually he joined the church and became instrumental in leading others to it. When someone told him that another church was "not for ex-convicts" he replied quietly, "I would rather belong to a church of ex-convicts than to a church of ex-converts."

Then there was the case of a widow struggling to support her three young children. She sewed for a tailoring concern which not only paid starvation wages, but saved the shop rent by requiring the work to be

MEN OF POWER

done at home. She had developed a terror of leaving the children there even during her brief absences required while returning the clothing to her employer, for on one such occasion her youngest child had been burned to death. She came to Taylor because now it seemed to her an even greater peril menaced her two daughters, for the home in which they lived was situated between two of the worst resorts in the city, one a rowdy saloon and the other a police-protected brothel. Taylor, after trying in vain to reduce the hazards in these resorts, helped the woman move to better surroundings.

The Inadequacy of Individual Help. Such experiences, important though they were to the individuals whom he helped and to himself, nevertheless left him increasingly with a sense of inadequacy and incompleteness. For moving the widow and her daughters to safer quarters only left the old ones for some new family attracted by the cheap rent. The drunkard or gambler or thief reclaimed by his personal friendship and Christian message often found the lure of the saloons and the brothels too strong and fell again into the old evil ways. The environment made human wrecks faster than his church or all churches together could salvage them. The vital connection between character and industrial conditions forced itself into his thinking. He saw men with families to support suddenly thrown out of employment after years of faithful service with no notice other than a slip in their

GRAHAM TAYLOR

weekly pay envelope reading "no more work until further notice," or "your services no longer required." He saw sweatshops overwork and underpay girls until their youth and vitality ebbed from them. He saw men thrown into jail on the charge of "vagrancy" (punishable by ninety days' imprisonment under the state law) when their only crime had been tramping the streets or roads in search of work. Yet his only attack upon such hell-breeding conditions was to try to help individuals against these odds.

To that attack he brought not only his energy, understanding, and religious faith, together with the fellowship and equipment of his church, but also the resources of his home. For he and his wife had established it near the church, identifying their own life with that of the mechanics, day laborers, and small merchants whose families surrounded them. The hospitable doors of the Taylor home swung wide for these neighbors as well as for the procession of hundreds of individuals who came seeking friendship and aid.

But the combined resources of the man, the church, and the Christian home still proved inadequate to thwart the downward push of social and industrial conditions under which men worked—or couldn't work. As yet there was no collective effort, either civic or religious, to change the environment. The reason seemed to lie in the fact that so few understood, or cared, or knew how to go about it.

Teaching Young Ministers. When, therefore, after

MEN OF POWER

eight years of labor as pastor he was called by The Hartford Theological Seminary to its chair of Practical Theology, he saw the opening as an opportunity to train young ministers in the understanding and in the co-operative methods necessary for attacking these community problems. He accepted the call on condition that he could retain his connection with the Fourth Church and use it as a clinic where his students could be brought into close contact with the human and complicated situations which they would later confront in their future parishes. His own salary as pastor he donated to the church to engage a co-pastor.

For the next four years he concentrated his energy upon this combined work of clinical teaching and pastoral supervision. At first he met with considerable opposition from both conservative and liberal ministers—from the conservatives because his teaching put too much stress on social conditions, from the liberals because he continued his aggressive evangelistic work at Fourth Church. He made no apology for either. His Dutch Reformed background and training still held him to the emphasis upon individual salvation. His experience, on the other hand, had taught him that the social environment must also be saved in order to give the redeemed individual a chance to stay redeemed.

Two extracts from his diary in these years of conflict make clear that this increasing social interest had not superseded personal religion. The first was written

GRAHAM TAYLOR

on his fortieth birthday a few months after he had entered upon his work at Hartford.

Renewedly am I convinced that to see up toward God I must continue to look down into man, and to see down into men I must look up to God.

The second he made some seven months later during an illness.

Two practical conclusions have grown to necessities in the spiritual, mental, and physical experiences through which the Lord manifests his will in our lives, viz.: that if I am to live and do the work God seems to have given me a chance to do, I must

1. Take time to care for and increase physical vitality daily.
2. Devote the first half hour of the early morning to readjust my life to the Lord, its light. . . .
3. Bring to bear upon the mind *daily* power literature enough to move it out after reading and thought. Drummond's "Changed Life" has helped me so much these days.

An Important Decision. Four months later another diary entry crystallizes an attitude toward which his social work and his ever-widening observation had irresistibly driven him.

Christian sociology is the door—wide and effectual—opening to me, and to all that can make the remainder of my life most effectual. Henceforth I seek that kingdom first.

MEN OF POWER

On July 5, 1892, just three months after this entry, The Chicago Theological Seminary voted to call him to head its new department of Christian Sociology. That action brought him to the most important vocational choice of his life. To accept it would mean that he would probably devote the rest of his years to civic and social work in connection with his teaching, and reduce or abandon his individual evangelistic efforts. To reject it would probably mean going on as he had at Hartford.

Twelve weeks he delayed the decision. Citizens of Hartford, from insurance company heads to local firemen, urged him to stay. His old friend Dr. Hartranft, president of Hartford Seminary, offered to establish a department similar to Chicago's if Taylor would remain to lead it. On the other hand, Chicago Seminary sent an able professor, Dr. Samuel Ives Curtiss, with a hundred typewritten pages of persuasive argument, to camp on his trail day and night, week in and week out. Dr. Curtiss camped with indefatigable persistence, pressing the claims of the West.

Torn between the friends in Hartford, with all his family and religious background rooted in the East, and the promise of a pioneer work in Chicago, Taylor had no peace until he made his decision. That choice he based finally upon the fact that he knew "how little freedom Hartford and the Seminary's conservative giving constituency might allow anything suspiciously challenging to *laissez faire* economic orthodoxy, while

GRAHAM TAYLOR

Chicago guaranteed unrestricted liberty." So he chose Chicago, but only after the directors and faculty of The Chicago Theological Seminary had accepted promptly his one condition :

Within the limits of my own department I am to have the liberty of administration for such independent development as, on the one hand, may be consistent with all deference due to institutional interests and the rights of other departments, and, on the other hand, shall be in accordance with its own distinctive sphere and different methods.

The die was cast. Henceforth he was to be a pioneer on the social frontier. He had cut loose from the old ties and the theologically doctrinal approach to social problems. Yet he brought with him to Chicago a set of convictions that he had refined out of his experience—convictions about an indwelling God of love, the sacredness of all men as his children, the potentiality of personality, the family as the unit of society, and "the neighborhood as the medium for the expansion of the fraternal spirit into the sphere of the local community and government." With these convictions—and a loyal family who shared them—he went forth to unknown adventures.

That these adventures would be attended by some peril he well knew. The opponents to any teaching of Christian sociology in a theological seminary were already sharpening their swords for attack. The very word "sociology" was regarded by many as synony-

MEN OF POWER

mous with socialism, than which nothing could, to them, be more hateful. The science itself was so new that it was not even mentioned in the *Encyclopedia Americana* of 1873 nor in Johnson's *Universal Encyclopedia* of 1887. Almost no textbooks were available, and none at all with any appreciation of the part religion might play in reconstructing society. Political leaders of a certain stripe would scorn the new professor as a meddler, an impractical dreamer, and a troublemaker. Some business men whose profits had come from human exploitation would share the same opinion. Among his ministerial colleagues, too, were those who looked askance at both the Seminary and Professor Taylor for going off at a tangent from the "real gospel" of individual salvation.

But he knew, too, that he was not altogether alone. Other men and women of like convictions had been blazing similar trails in other parts of the world: Octavia Hill working for better housing in London; Canon Barnett establishing Toynbee Hall as a center for a neighborly group among the poorest of the poor in Whitechapel, East London; Cyrus Hamlin introducing plows and sanitary bakeries in connection with his missionary work in Turkey; Francis G. Peabody offering a course in Harvard on "The Ethics of the Social Question"; William J. Tucker founding the educationally influential experiment of Andover House in South Boston; Dean George Hodges with his Kingsley House in Pittsburgh; Washington Gladden preach-

GRAHAM TAYLOR

ing the social gospel with power in Columbus, Ohio; and in Chicago itself a courageous young woman named Jane Addams creating Hull House on South Halsted as a center where that gospel was being demonstrated in daily practice. As the train bore him and his family westward, the thought of such fellow-workers, however scattered, buoyed his spirit to face whatever opposition he would meet.

Scenes from His Chicago Adventures. His labors of forty-five years in Chicago have already been summarized in the citation for the Merit Award quoted at the beginning of this sketch. Limits of space preclude any detailed consideration of them here. But we may at least present a few snapshots of him in action—snapshots that catch him in typical moments on the social frontier.

The first shows him facing his first audience in Chicago. The occasion is his inauguration as Professor of Christian Sociology at The Chicago Theological Seminary, then located on the West Side near the center of the city's vast polyglot industrial population. Outside the building the street, once residential, is thronged with traffic and with men and women going to and from their work in factories, restaurants, and cheap amusement places. Inside are gathered the directors, faculty, and student body. The students are especially curious about this new teacher. What is this queer subject he is introducing into their curricu-

MEN OF POWER

lum? What books will he assign? How will his methods differ from those of other instructors?

He is telling them that their chief textbooks, after certain groundwork historical studies, will be those men and women passing on the sidewalk, their homes, their places of work and play, their local organizations. He will lead his classes out from the seminary walls and into the very heart of the city's life. He will establish a clinic for them comparable to the clinics used by medical schools in the training of young doctors, or to the practice schools connected with normal schools for the training of teachers. His students will supplement their historical and theological studies with practical studies in the cause and cure of pauperism, intemperance, and crime. This will require explorations into heredity and environment and their effect in moulding human character.

They must know not only the church but the various other groups and agencies wherein men, women, and children mingle: the family, the neighborhood, the civic, industrial, and cultural organizations. All these have an essential part to play in the building of the kingdom of God. Young ministers must know how to work sympathetically with them, co-operate with them, and help them to work with each other for the common good. Just as the history of the English people really began when a few of them "by the grace of God began to drain the fens," so these students will write a new page in the history of the Covenants of Promise when

GRAHAM TAYLOR

they begin to apply their religion to the routine life of the common people, to look to the conditions under which they earn their daily bread, to plan for decent homes, to clean houses and streets, to build schools and hospitals and playgrounds, and to develop educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities. Such work is no departure from the ancient Christian gospel, but a fulfillment of it.

The speech is ended; the faculty and directors file out in academic procession, some in exaltation that a new prophet has come to the kingdom at a critical hour, others wondering. As for the students, they gather in their rooms and debate this interesting new doctrine far into the night, after the fashion of students of every generation.

Two years pass. The Seminary has been unable to raise the funds necessary for the sociological clinic Professor Taylor has wanted; so he has undertaken to secure one for himself. He has rented an old rat-and-vermin-ridden house in the heart of one of the most congested districts in the city, in the midst of tenements overcrowded with Irish, Germans, Scandinavians, Italians, and other immigrants. The building is spacious, but neither comfortable nor cheery. It has a large basement, formerly used as a stable, and three floors of rooms of various sizes. Few closets and scant water supply, together with an old furnace and eighteen coal stoves, combine to make housekeeping difficult. On one side is a furniture factory where a buzz-saw rasps

MEN OF POWER

all day long. On the other, a saloon and a sausage factory in the rear produce a different set of noises and odors through the night. In front, an unpaved road supplies dust for every room in the house when the wind is up.

Professor Taylor has obtained the place only after guaranteeing the rental out of his own salary. The owners and the neighbors have looked upon him with some suspicion, and his sanity has been questioned. Nevertheless into this building he and his wife and four children have moved. With them have come a dozen resident staff workers, donating their services for the good of the cause. They have christened it "Chicago Commons"; for its purpose is to be a common meeting place for men, women, and children of all nationalities, races, and religions. They have cleaned out the basement and made it into an assembly room; they have opened other rooms for reading and games and educational classes yet to be organized. But their first contribution is the simple fact that it is their own *home* and one that radiates its spirit of happy harmony to all who enter. "The spirit of the house must not be made," Professor Taylor has insisted; "it must simply *be*."

Gradually that house spirit has been felt by an increasing number of people who have ventured timidly or curiously within its portals. They have told others, and the numbers of visitors have increased until after a few months the old building has become a center for

GRAHAM TAYLOR

neighborhood meetings ranging from a kindergarten and a Roman Catholic choir rehearsal to labor union meetings. One immigrant expresses the need of many, saying, "I must join something soon, for I cannot fight all hell alone."

And now on a typical evening we find his resident staff workers and students sharing in these various meetings and later comparing notes with each other and with him of their week's activities. One recounts what he has seen and heard visiting jails that day, another his experiences in a hospital, a third his interviews with employers and labor leaders, a fourth his observation in the courts and at probation agencies, a fifth his studies of child life in the neighborhood, a sixth his survey of health and sanitary conditions, a seventh a report on the churches of the district, and an eighth his impressions of political activities and their relation to civic and social conditions in the ward. Discussion follows each student's presentation of his facts gathered at first hand, questions are raised, the next steps planned, and Professor Taylor draws the meeting to a close by showing the relation of their work to the upbuilding of the kingdom of God on earth. "We never knew," said one student in later years, "where Graham Taylor would start the discussion; but we always knew he would end it in the kingdom on earth."

The opposition which any such venture is sure to meet begins to find voice in Chicago's leading financial paper, *The Chronicle*, before Graham Taylor has com-

MEN OF POWER

pleted his first year, and continues with increasing vehemence for several years. It accuses him of socialism and inciting to crime because he and his students and staff workers have sought to discover the causes of crime and have spoken out against conditions that bred crime. When the Seminary faces a crisis in its finances, the *Chronicle* is quick to lay the blame upon him for "substituting socialism for Christianity, and politics for teaching." The sting of this unfair criticism is partially removed when Graham Taylor discovers that a wealthy merchant of Chicago, Mr. G. E. P. Dodge, after reading these attacks in the *Chronicle*, has become so aroused by their injustice that he has changed his will to increase his bequest to Chicago Commons from \$15,000 to \$25,000. The *Chronicle's* carping is all but forgotten when Victor Lawson, publisher of the more influential *Daily News*, offers Graham Taylor a column each Saturday for his signed interpretation of current social movements. He writes this column each week for nearly forty years without restriction upon his freedom.

Other men of means and of broad understanding of the city's need also come to the aid of the Commons, and after six years in the old house it moves to new quarters specially designed and built for it. The enlarged equipment requires an enlarged budget for operation, and throughout his forty-five years in Chicago he is never free from the necessity of raising funds. These extracts from his diary are typical: "June 13,

GRAHAM TAYLOR

1901. Soliciting building funds. Secured \$1,000. Held Community Club Clean City Rally"; "May 5, 1914. Clearing off overhanging things—Commons deficit worst of all. Loaned all I could and tried to raise enough to tide over until I come back." (He was about to leave for Geneva, Switzerland, where he was a delegate to a peace conference.)

From the new Commons as a center he and his staff work out in the community problems of vice, crime, labor strife, corrupt politics, and unemployment. One day, for example, a widowed mother of the neighborhood asks their help in finding her fifteen-year-old daughter, who has disappeared while seeking employment in answer to an advertisement for "a prepossessing girl to wait upon an invalid old lady." Graham Taylor's investigation reveals that the "invalid old lady" is a procuress employed by a man with a prosperous and respectable business. Professor Taylor rescues the girl and prosecutes the man and his woman accomplice. But the prosecution is complicated by the man's escape to Canada, warned by friendly detectives of the police department; and complicated further by attempts to "fix" the jury which tries the woman accomplice, and by efforts on the part of some ruffians to kidnap the girl during the trial and spirit her away. To guard her Graham Taylor takes her into the Commons household and accompanies her to and from the trial each day. The procuress is finally convicted and sent to prison, and the girl helped out of the state to

MEN OF POWER

protect her from vengeance. Numerous experiences of this kind by the Commons workers and other social agencies disclose the unholy alliance of politics and police with crime and lead eventually to the appointment of a city vice commission and a clean-up campaign in which the decent forces of the city unite against the alliance in a war that shakes the metropolis to its foundations and brings in a reform administration.

Other experiences on the civic frontier lead to the formation of the Municipal Voters League with Graham Taylor as one of its founders. Its fair and factual appraisals of aldermanic candidates gain the confidence of the electorate and pave the way to the election of men of integrity and intelligence to the city council.

After the Cherry Mine disaster, in which two hundred and seventy-four men had lost their lives, he works indefatigably to help raise a relief fund of \$177,000 for their families, and as a member of the State Mining Investigation Commission to obtain both state and national laws protecting miners from fire and for increase of resources and facilities for rescue of lives endangered in mine catastrophes. These laws have done much to safeguard the lives of America's 600,000 coal miners.

One of his hottest battles grows out of his insistence on the right and desirability of free speech. He establishes at the Commons a "Free Floor," where in weekly gatherings the people of the neighborhood may air their

GRAHAM TAYLOR

views on any subject pertinent to the common welfare. Naturally many grievances are voiced—against oppressive working conditions, the harsh treatment of the unemployed, the indecent housing of the poor, the lack of provision for the health and play of children, the inefficiency of local city officials, and the suppression of minority rights. Some speakers contend that there can be no cure for these ills until capitalistic industrialism is superseded by some new form of social organization. Other speakers see no hope in revolution but urge reform. The audiences, growing ever larger, listen and applaud or heckle the speakers until the meeting adjourns and then go out to continue the discussion in their homes. This "Free Floor" soon becomes famous. Conservative newspapers pounce upon it as a hotbed of "anarchy." Graham Taylor sees it as a safety valve, comparable to London's noted Hyde Park. Moreover, it is a thermometer for the body politic indicating where the fever of human suffering is highest.

The test of this institution comes one day when it is announced that Mrs. Lucy Parsons, an anarchist, has asked for an opportunity to speak at the next session of the "Free Floor." Lucy Parsons is the forceful widow of Alfred Parsons, who some years before had been executed as an "anarchist" after Chicago's Haymarket riot on what in later years is proven to be totally inadequate evidence. Every year since then in industrial centers throughout America and many parts of Europe memorial services have been held commemorat-

MEN OF POWER

ing, on the anniversary of his death, the "martyrdom" of Parsons and the eight comrades who were executed with him. At such occasions Mrs. Parsons has usually spoken and just as usually been arrested by the police. Now at Chicago Commons a great crowd has gathered, including the police ready for their customary rôle of repression. Graham Taylor knows that nothing will please his critics more than to have this "Free Floor" checked by police interference. If Lucy Parsons is arrested, others may be in subsequent meetings, and free speech will soon vanish. He therefore assures her in a friendly way that there will be no interference if he can prevent it and suggests that she frankly and freely state the experiences and motives that have led to her present attitude toward the social order. "The suspicioning look of one who is hunted" fades from her face as she replies, "You will not be disappointed in having spoken kindly to me." She makes her speech quietly and with poise, telling the story of her life in Chicago and her husband's struggle for justice for workers. Yet the simple, unadorned tale has a more poignant effect than the violent charges she has often uttered against the government. But there is absolutely nothing in it that the watchful police can seize upon as seditious. They make no protest, and the "Free Floor" is henceforth unmolested.

A young man of the neighborhood, William E. Dever, forms the habit of listening to these "Free Floor" discussions and begins to take part in them.

GRAHAM TAYLOR

Soon he becomes interested in the other activities of the Commons. His own spirit catches something of the forthright honesty and courage of the institution and of Graham Taylor at its heart. In a few years he enters the political arena and becomes an alderman representing the ward. A few years more and he is elected mayor of Chicago and gives the city as honest and courageous an administration as it has ever had.

Mayor Dever was but one of thousands across whose souls Graham Taylor wrote his signature in letters of sympathy, courage, honesty, and neighborly understanding. James Mullenbach, long-time labor arbitrator and later member of the federal government's coal and steel boards, was another; Raymond Robins, famed social worker, a third; John Palmer Gavit, journalistic interpreter of social movements, a fourth; Paul U. Kellogg, editor of the *Survey* and *Survey Graphic* (which claim as one source the journal entitled *The Commons* which Graham Taylor had founded), a fifth; and so on—the list is well-nigh endless. His students and resident staff workers have scattered to every corner of America, and many to Europe and the Far East. Wherever they are they are leavening the lump of social unrest, trying to understand its causes, and bringing to it the trained understanding of sympathetic minds. On the campus of the University of Chicago, the School of Social Service Administration, an outgrowth of his teaching and pioneering, is training new hundreds to carry on the work to which he

MEN OF POWER

devoted so many hard-struggling years. The Chicago Theological Seminary has named its main assembly hall after him and has expanded the single chair he established into one of its major departments, now headed by a new prophet of social justice, Dr. Arthur E. Holt. Chicago Commons itself goes steadily forward under the able leadership of its founder's daughter, Lea D. Taylor.

The Keynote to His Adventure. Such a life cannot be judged by days or years; only the centuries can measure its influence. The source of its power, matured from his long heritage of Dutch Reformed ancestors, his Christian home, his early years in the ministry, and his valiant struggles on the social frontier, may well be found in that faith which he hammered out on the anvil of daily experience:

I now affirm that this democratic faith in fellow men, which I followed hither, falters not. No class consciousness of either class in conflict; no aristocracy of any claimants, except those who possess worth and attest it by service; no dictatorship, either beneficent or cruelly despotic, has ever caused me to waver a hair's breadth from my faith in the supremacy of the democratic order of Government and social justice. That faith still stands undaunted and undimmed by any cynical default from democracy or any disclaimers of loyalty to social and religious ideals. . . .

The religious hope for our times, our country, our world, as well as for the soul, is the port of entry toward which I have ever steered my endeavors. It is the hope, shared with all the prophets and apostles, singers

GRAHAM TAYLOR

and seers, that right is mighty and must prevail, that truth will outlive error, that love abides and cannot fail. My thought of this hope meanwhile has broadened out from my somewhat too rigid training in school and church, has grown as flexible as life has been found to be, and has become more hospitably tolerant and liberal as the horizon has spread more widely skyward and the world has drawn nearer.⁸

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The faith of this spirit finds expression not in creed but in deed; not in ritual but in the sacraments of daily life; not in the propaganda of any sect that must necessarily be divisive but in the promotion of sentiments and interests held in common by all real faiths; not in exclusive communions whose fellowships are to be cherished by individual adherents but by the all-inclusive community consciousness to be extended to all mankind.

There is withal a social vision that visualizes such far-off divine events as though near enough to be gradually attainable. This imaginable social hope sustains patience to wait while we work with a faith that is the "substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen."⁹

At Christmas time in his eighty-fourth year he sent out this message entitled "The Keynote to the Whole Adventure." "The goodwill to understand one an-

⁸ From Dr. Taylor's response to the greetings of Mayor William E. Dever on the occasion of laying the cornerstone of Graham Taylor Hall on November 18, 1926.

⁹ Graham Taylor, *Chicago Commons Through Forty Years*, Chicago Commons Association, 1936, pp. 199-200.

MEN OF POWER

other, to interpret misunderstood attitudes and situations, to reconcile and be reconciled to differences of taste and temperament, race and religion, heritage and aspiration, and through service and sacrifice to promote the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace—this is the way toward the peace of God that passeth all understanding. Such is the meaning of our forty years' experience here. Is it not the hope for the best that is yet to be everywhere?"

Peacefully—almost triumphantly—he passed away on September 26, 1938, at the age of eighty-seven. As his body lay in state in Chicago Commons, a long and motley procession wound its sorrowing way from the city streets to pay silent homage to this great pioneer on the social frontier. City and state officials, labor-union representatives, heads of industries; women in aprons, men in overalls; leaders of settlements, boys' clubs, girls' clubs, educational societies; rich men, poor men; Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and atheists; whites and negroes—all came, bowed their heads, and went out again into the streets of the city he loved. One typical group of poor Italian boys came and knelt, Catholic fashion, beside the bier while the oldest of their number whispered to the others of what this man had done for them.

One of his former students, Nels Francis Nordstrom, went home and wrote these lines:

We knew him as a child of the earth,
But that divine connection which links the clay of the

GRAHAM TAYLOR

earth with the light that illumines the sun and the stars made bright his life and the path he followed.

He knew the ways of men,
the hungers, the tragedy, the yearnings of the human.
He knew the brutal realities of conflict and competition,
the suffering of the underprivileged and disinherited.
He knew the full meaning of poverty and injustice.
He knew the tragedy of broken lives and disillusioned hopes and dreams.

He knew the ways of the city,
the corruption of politics, the struggle of power-seeking groups.

He knew the ways of the machine,
the deadening routine of the shift and the pain of the lay-off.

He knew the dark tragedy which lurked in the mines and in the hovels of company towns.

All this he knew—and more—for
He lived in the shadow of hardship—
caught in the turmoil and strife of racial confusion—
close to the suffering, aching heart of humanity.

He also knew the ways of the divine.
To him the way of injustice pointed the way to justice,
the way of despair pointed the way to hope.
Though he bore the sufferings of men,
he linked it with the suffering of God.
Though he bore the defeat of the human,
he linked it with the victory of the spirit.
Though men ridiculed and abused him—
calling him a dreamer, a theorist, a rebel—
He returned their misunderstandings with the understanding love of a neighbor and a great friend.

MEN OF POWER

He walked the ways of Man and the ways of God.
We knew him as a child of the earth,
 but the celestial light of his soul is still with us as we
 follow
The man-ward path of his life, and the God-ward reach
 of his spirit.

Postscript: Since I find this unexpected gift of space I cannot refrain from using it to relate the following incident:

A few years ago when Kagawa, the great novelist and Christian social worker of Japan, came to this country, it was my privilege to introduce him to Graham Taylor. It didn't take much introducing to bring them together for each knew of the other's work. I had no sooner made clear their names than they seemed to explode. They pounded each other and jumped about like happy children. We got into a car and drove downtown together. I sat back and watched these two great Christians. Dr. Taylor was so excited recalling similar struggles they had been through that he tried to make Kagawa remember things which had happened before the latter was born. Kagawa was equally excited exchanging his experiences on the social frontier. As I watched them, it suddenly became clear to me that here was a shining example of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.—F. E.

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